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# The American Mercury

CAN TRUMAN AVOID WORLD WAR III?

William C. Bullitt

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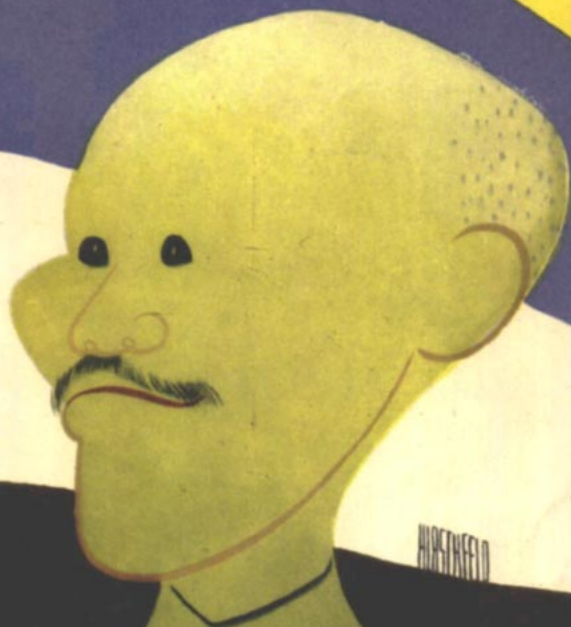
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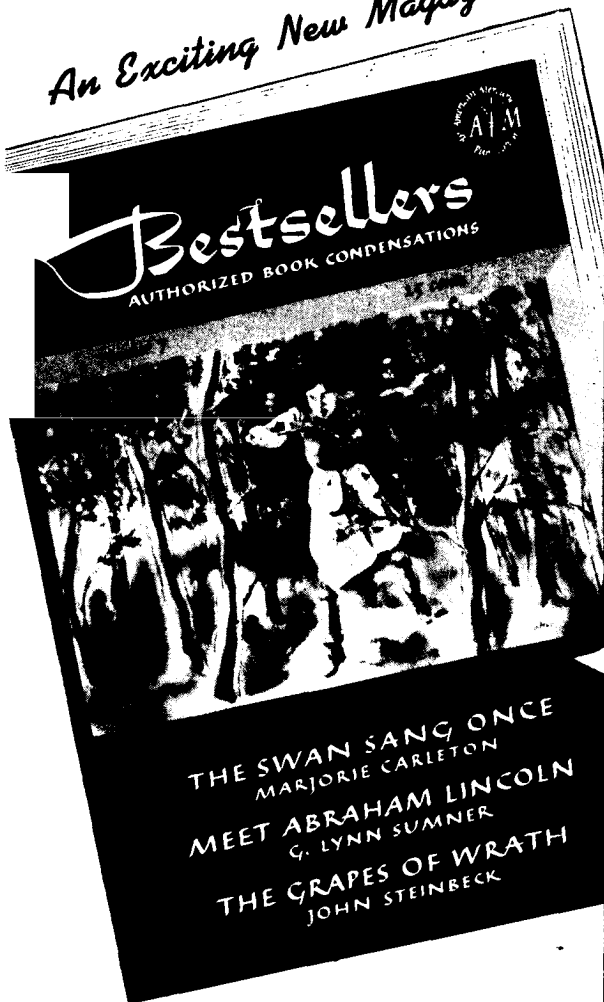


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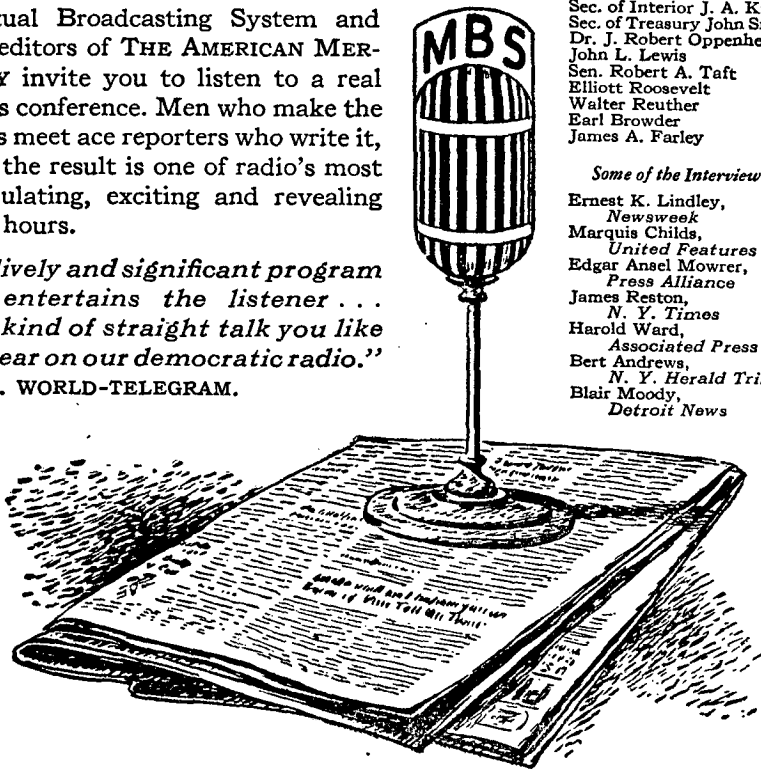
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# The American Mercury

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VOLUME LXIV

JUNE 1947

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Charles Angoff, *Managing Editor*

Mildred Falk, *Associate Editor*; Daniel Seligman, *Assistant Editor*;

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NOT LONG AGO, the Secretary of the United States Treasury studied a figure-covered sheet of paper.

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# The American Mercury

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## CAN TRUMAN AVOID WORLD WAR III?

BY

WILLIAM C. BULLITT

The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved. . . . Totalitarian régimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine . . . the security of the United States. . . . It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. . . . This is a serious course upon which we embark. I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN, MARCH 12, 1947.

AT TIMES in human history there are words which are acts. President Truman's words of March 12, 1947, constitute such an act — an act of great service to the American people. For by his words he ended our

disastrous policy of drift, and set a course that may bring us not only to security but also to peace.

All democracies find it hard to face unpleasant facts and prefer to cling to happy illusions until they are hit on the head, as we were at Pearl Harbor. But if democracies do not act in time to prevent governments which are hostile to them from developing dangerous military power and seizing strategic areas from which to attack them, they are obliged finally to resort to the most costly form of defense — war. And they do not always win. That is the thought behind President Truman's frank words.

Our objectives in World War II

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WILLIAM C. BULLITT, one of President Roosevelt's closest friends, was our ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1933 to 1936, and to France from 1936 to 1941. During the last war he was an ambassador at large. His most recent book is *The Great Globe Itself*.



were to prevent the conquest of Europe by Hitler and the conquest of the Far East by the Japanese militarists. We knew that we would be in mortal peril if we permitted Hitler to organize Europe and Africa for eventual attack on the Western Hemisphere and the Japanese militarists to organize Asia for a similar attack. Today, it is not the defunct National-Socialist dictator who is attempting to extend his rule over Europe and Africa but the mighty National-Communist dictator. It is no longer the defeated Japanese militarists but Stalin's agents who are attempting to gain control of China, Korea and Indo-China. In the person of Stalin, the aims of both Hitler and the Japanese militarists are united. We now face the bitter possibility that the result of our sacrifices and victory in World War II will be the domination of the Far East by the Soviet Union, and the domination of Europe, the Near East, and Africa by the Soviet Union. We do not like to look at these sinister facts; but they are the vital facts of life on this earth today.

By what enormous error of judgment have we garnered such a poisonous fruit of victory? The answer is clear. When our government began in 1941 to treat the Soviet Union as a "peace-loving democracy" instead of as a predatory totalitarian tyranny, it made one of the most disastrous errors in the history of the United States. We based our foreign policy on the exact reverse of the truth. While our soldiers, sailors and aviators were

fighting with superb skill and courage, our foreign policy was being handled with ignorant and reckless disregard of the vital interests of the American people. We did nothing whatsoever to guarantee ourselves against the possibility — which was in fact a certainty — that Stalin's totalitarian dictatorship would turn out to have the same aim of world conquest as Hitler's totalitarian dictatorship. At the conferences of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, we continued to give Stalin what he wanted, hoping that in the end he would turn out to be an amiable, peace-loving democrat. Even Secretary Byrnes when he took office in the summer of 1945 was imbued with the idea that he "knew how to get along perfectly with Stalin," and it took many months for him to learn that Stalin would not stop of his own will — but could only be stopped.

When Secretary Byrnes had learned that bitter lesson, which sooner or later all Americans will have to learn, he resisted Soviet imperialism manfully. By taking a very strong stand when the Soviet Union seemed on the point of invading Turkey, he warded off, momentarily at least, that threat to the eastern Mediterranean area. By most skillful support of the Iranian government, he enabled it to wipe out the agents of Stalin who had seized northern Iran. These two episodes demonstrated clearly that Stalin is not ready to risk armed conflict with the United States. We are today far stronger than the Soviet Union — and Stalin knows it.



## II

Our position in the world today singularly resembles that of the French Republic in March 1936. At that time the French air force and army were by far the strongest in the world, and the French navy was vastly superior to the German navy. Yet Hitler dared to commence his career of conquest on March 7, 1936, by sending his troops into the Rhineland — thus breaking the Treaty of Versailles. France had every right in international law to throw the German army out of the Rhineland, and to march to Berlin; and we now have proof that Hitler himself knew so well that France could crush Germany that he had given orders for his troops to leave the Rhineland at once if France should mobilize. But mobilization of an army is expensive and the French government wanted to balance its budget. Mobilization is also politically unpopular, as it tears men away from their families and affairs. Moreover, Hitler was professing friendship for France, and there were many honest, ill-informed Frenchmen who believed him and argued that Hitler intended never to harm France, that the French must learn to understand his ideals — just as today in our country there are star-gazers who argue that Stalin never intends to harm the United States.

Hitler immediately proceeded to lock France out of Central and Eastern Europe, where she had allies, by building the Siegfried Line. Swiftly

he enlarged his army and air force. He seized Austria, then Czechoslovakia. Then he secured Stalin's assistance by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty of August 23, 1939 — the secret protocol of which, now in our hands, divided Poland between the totalitarian dictators and assigned Finland, Estonia and Latvia to Stalin. Nine days later Hitler attacked Poland. Seventeen days after that Stalin attacked Poland. France remained effectively locked out of Central and Eastern Europe. Nine months later, having secured his strategic position, obtained Stalin's support, and tested his young army and air force, Hitler crushed France. By her failure to face the facts in 1936, France had achieved nothing but her own destruction.

To lull future victims into a false sense of security while seizing strategic areas as bases from which to attack and conquer them, was the principle of Hitler's strategy of conquest and remains the principle of Stalin's strategy. The tactics employed by Stalin are the same as Hitler's: fifth columns, propaganda, treaties made and broken, threats and armed force. Indeed, the chief difference between the methods of Hitler and Stalin lies in Stalin's abler employment of fifth columns. Hitler never succeeded in building up in the countries he intended to conquer instruments as powerful as Stalin's Communist Parties and their associated fellow-travelers.

The United States today has the world's largest navy and mightiest air

force and exclusive possession of the atomic bomb. But in this same world with us is a totalitarian dictator who is just as determined to crush us and make the world his world as Hitler was to crush France. And time is running against us as time ran against France after March 1936. Each day that passes brings us closer to the day when the Soviet Union will have the atomic bomb. Each day brings increased strength to Stalin's army and air force; for the major productive energies of the Soviet Union are still being turned into production for war. Each day Stalin's domination of Eastern and Central Europe becomes more effective, and even now he could employ all the resources of that vast area containing more than a hundred million souls for war against us. He has annexed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania; and has brought under his domination all Poland, all Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, and the Red Army zones in Germany and Austria. He is relentlessly closing his iron grip on Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Finland.

He is bringing pressure on Greece and Turkey too great for them to resist by their own unaided strength. His fifth columns are attempting to Communize all Germany, and his agents have become so powerful in France and Italy that they have been able to compel acceptance of their leaders as members of the governments of those great states.

## III

At the eastern end of Stalin's vast empire, which now contains more than a sixth of the surface of the earth, the agents of the Communist dictator have been equally active. The Chinese Communist Army, fighting with arms delivered to it by the Soviet government, has been able to prevent the Chinese government from establishing its authority in large areas of North China, and is attempting to overthrow the Government. The Soviet government controls fully the northern zone of Korea, and by propaganda and the activities of its agents is attempting to Communize the southern, American zone. In Indo-China, Communists trained in Moscow have captured leadership of the independence movement.

Even within the inner bastion of the United States — the Western Hemisphere — Stalin's agents are moving from success to success. Three Communists sit today as members of the government of Chile. In Cuba and Venezuela the Communists are already a potential threat to democratic government. Brazil awoke recently to find that the Communists had become the largest party in the city council of its capital, Rio de Janeiro. In nearly all of Latin America the Communists are gaining increased control of the trade unions.

Moreover, each day the situation of the states of Europe and Asia which remain outside Stalin's control grows worse. Great Britain is in the grip of

the most dangerous economic crisis that has confronted any great state in modern times, and her financial resources no longer permit her to carry the burdens of her empire. She has announced that she will quit India definitely and permanently in 1948; she is withdrawing her troops from Egypt; and has decided to hand her mandate over Palestine to the United Nations. Faced by the imminent problem of earning enough to feed, house and clothe her people, Great Britain can no longer afford to protect other peoples from Soviet aggression. France is living from hand to mouth under the threat of a Communist-contrived general strike. The sweep of the Communists in Italy is still restrained by the presence of American and British troops, but these forces will soon be withdrawn, and the Communists will be free to strike for power. The economic and financial crisis in China is so grave that the advance of the Chinese army against the Communists is threatened by economic collapse behind its lines. Throughout the entire earth Stalin's forces are on the offensive and the democracies are in retreat. To prevent Stalin from uniting the strength of Europe, Asia and Africa for a final assault on the Western Hemisphere is today a vital interest of the United States.

In the service of that vital interest, President Truman has now acted to stop the advance of Soviet imperialism. His act has taken the form of a request to the Congress to provide

authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400 million. But his message requesting this sum has a world-wide importance transcending its immediate objective; for in it the President made clear his conviction that the independence of the United States and the liberties of Americans must be defended by immediate and effective opposition to any further extension of the power of the Soviet dictator. "The alternative is much more serious," said the President. What is that alternative? To permit Stalin to organize the rest of the peoples of the earth for an ultimate assault on us. We know what would be the final result of choosing that alternative. One hundred and forty million Americans, however brave and well equipped they might be, could not in the long run resist an attack by all the other inhabitants of the earth. If we are to survive we must make the necessary effort now to prevent further advances of Soviet imperialism.

How can we? We are heavily burdened by the debt of World War II, and if we are to keep our system of free enterprise, which has given us the world's most efficient system of production and the world's highest standard of living, we can not go on indefinitely piling debts on our debts, taxes on our taxes. Our productive capacity and our financial strength, great as they are, are not sufficient to enable us to give adequate help at one and the same time to all the peoples threatened by Soviet imperialism. We

can, however, give much help to many peoples without ruining ourselves. But we shall be obliged to choose with extreme care the points at which we shall apply such strength as we possess. We must give up the luxury of basing our foreign policy on hunch, whim, and sentiment, and base it on hard facts and the vital interests of the American people.

#### IV

In this respect, the diplomatic situation which now confronts General Marshall as Secretary of State resembles the military situation which confronted him as Chief of Staff after Pearl Harbor. We did not then have enough to give all our allies all they needed. Again and again General Marshall was obliged to remind the military leaders of our allies that the task of the Combined Chiefs of Staff was to partition deficits. There were no surpluses to divide. As there was never enough to cover all needs, we were often obliged to take great risks. We were so short of escort vessels, and the German submarines in the Atlantic were so destructive, that we were obliged to concentrate nearly all our escort vessels against them and to take the calculated risk of sending our troop ships and merchant ships across the Pacific without escort. Similarly, today we have not in hand the means to strengthen all the diplomatic fronts at once. We must estimate as carefully as possible the maximum effort that we can afford to make without ruining our domestic economy, choose with

equal care the points at which we will apply our strength, and work out meticulously a time-table for our actions. Fortunately, not all the nations threatened by Soviet imperialism need help at one and the same time. But our diplomatic activities must be planned as carefully and comprehensively as our military actions were planned by the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff. As in World War II, we shall have to take calculated risks. We shall be obliged to establish diplomatic priorities as we once had to establish military priorities.

By President Truman's action of March 12, our first diplomatic priority has been given to Greece and Turkey — where the deadline of disaster is visibly close. Not far behind in urgency, and of enormous importance to us, is the critical situation in France. Let us, as one example of the problems that confront us throughout the earth, examine it in some detail:

If Stalin should achieve control of France through his fifth column, the French government, under orders from Moscow, would become our enemy. And the people of France, no matter how many of them may be today our friends, would be driven by Communist secret police and firing squads to obey Stalin's orders. That is a danger we have never had to face, as France has been our friend since Lafayette served with George Washington. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Senegal are all French. We should, therefore, have to face Stalin's air

force, camouflaged by French markings, at Casablanca, Bizerte, and Dakar — which lies opposite the bulge of Brazil. And we should have Stalin's planes in the French Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, close to the Panama Canal, and at St. Pierre and Miquelon, close to the entrance of the St. Lawrence River.

Control of France by Stalin would, moreover, produce a cataclysm in Europe. Italy, where the Communist Party is dangerously strong, would certainly fall into Stalin's hands. The American and British zones of occupation in western Germany, squeezed between a Communist France and Stalin's empire, would remain a small, unstable wedge in a vast Communist continent extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific — until the American and British troops were withdrawn. England, carrying as she is an almost unbearable economic burden, would face the prospect of Russian rockets, far more powerful than the German V-1s and V-2s, launched from France not only against London but also against her other great ports and manufacturing cities. Under those circumstances if England should still dare to stand up to the Soviet Union rather than surrender, she could hope to survive only as a large bomb-torn Malta, dependent on American aid for ultimate salvation. Moreover, with France in Stalin's hands, the fate of the smaller states of the Continent of Europe would be clearly traced — one by one they would succumb to

the strategy and tactics of conquest.

A Communist government in Paris would, therefore, entail consequences for the United States similar to the consequences to France of Hitler's introduction of his troops into the Rhineland in 1936. We would soon be locked out of all Europe and out of the Mediterranean by Stalin's iron curtain, as France was locked out of Central and Eastern Europe by the construction of the Siegfried Line. Both Europe and the possessions of the European states in Africa, Asia and America would be organized by the Communist dictator for ultimate attack on us.

#### V

A Communist government in Paris means a Communist Europe. Europe ruled by Communists and directed from Moscow would be as dangerous to the United States as Europe ruled by Nazis and directed from Berlin. The French Communists are driving for power so strongly and so cleverly that they may be able to seize the French government in 1947. Those are the facts; but not all the facts.

The Communist Party is the largest in France; but there are so many smaller French political parties that 72 per cent of the deputies in the French Parliament are anti-Communist. In a democracy enjoying normal physical, mental and moral health, that would ensure an anti-Communist government. But France is suffering physically; the leaders of her anti-Communist parties have

rival intellectual prescriptions for her recovery, and the habits of resistance to the law, acquired during the German occupation, have persisted to such an extent that the black market flourishes and bribery is rampant. The Communist leaders, using the threat of a general strike as a weapon, have compelled the other parties to give them high posts in the government. Today their leader, Thorez, a deserter from the French army in World War II, is Vice-President of the government, and Communists hold the Ministries of National Defense, Labor, Health, and Reconstruction. Moreover, they have infiltrated the other ministries to such an extent that Stalin has ears, eyes and hands throughout the whole government. Communist control of economic life is such that manufacturers, in order to get raw materials, must pay blackmail in the form of regular contributions to the Communist Party treasury.

The ground crews of the French air force are now almost entirely controlled by the Communists, and many of the officers in the air force are Communists. Moreover, the army contains many Communist officers as well as soldiers. In addition, the Communists have their own underground military units, which contain more men than the regular army units now stationed in France, and are well armed. Under these circumstances many anti-Communists fear to show their hostility to domination of France by Stalin, and it is not remarkable that, although 72 per cent

of the French Parliament is anti-Communist, people in Paris say freely that "Stalin can take over France by telephone whenever he wishes." This is not yet so; but it is true that the Communist octopus puts another tentacle into French life daily and that we have not much time for action if we are to help the anti-Communist French save the independence and freedom of their country.

#### VI

When Benjamin Franklin said at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately," he described exactly the position not only of the Signers of the Declaration in 1776 but also of the leaders of the French anti-Communist parties today. And since these men are the leaders of 72 per cent of a democratically elected parliament, the question is obvious: Why have they not formed a government of National Union, leaving the Communists a minority in opposition? The answer is that they cannot reconcile their conflicting convictions and ambitions, and above all that they fear that if the Communists should be excluded from the government they would call at once a general strike which might be successful in overthrowing the government. So they drift, while the Communists become stronger.

In 1910, when Aristide Briand was French Prime Minister, France had to meet a similar issue — that of a general strike on the railways. He

mobilized the strikers, arrested their leaders, and kept the essential services of France running. Today the task of defeating a general strike would be far more difficult. The Communists have large quantities of arms, and would certainly use them to try to overthrow the government. But that issue sooner or later will have to be met, and as the strength of the Communists increases each day, it is better to meet it today than tomorrow. The independence of France is at stake, and the vast majority of French men and women know that under Communist rule, which denies to the individual all the freedoms established under our Bill of Rights, "security becomes slavery, vocation forced labor, privacy concealment, the family a hutch for mass breeding, the school an outpost of the state, social intelligence a technique of rationalization, art and literature weapons to impose conformity, the person a subject."

If the leaders of the anti-Communist majority in the French Parliament should decide to form a government of National Union, leaving the Communist minority of the Parliament in opposition, we should give them all the aid necessary to enable them to maintain legal, democratic government in France against Communist attack. And we should then help them to make the economic machine of France function normally. The basic economic situation of France is sound, and if her Communists are brought under control, all she will need to become once more

a powerful democratic state will be assistance to repair the ravages of the war and the German occupation.

France may then become again one of the most potent forces for the maintenance of democracy throughout the world. For example, France may help us to remedy one of the greatest weaknesses of our foreign policy: our failure to propose an affirmative, constructive policy for the preservation of democracy and peace in Europe. We have made no effort to draw the democracies of Europe together for their own defense — which is our defense — although we know that if the remaining European democracies remain disunited they will be swallowed one by one by the Soviet dictator. If a major portion of Europe can not be united in a democratic federation, all Europe, in the long run, will be united under Soviet tyranny. France can regain her old position of great power in the world in the noblest manner by taking the lead in the formation of a European Federation, open to all states which are not puppets, and have democratic governments and enforce a Bill of Rights — German states included.

## VII

Scarcely less urgent than the critical situation of France is that of China, where political, economic and military conditions are all far worse than they were when General Marshall was sent there to attempt to stop the fighting between the Chinese govern-



ment troops and the Chinese Communist army, by mediation.

For us to risk postponement of action in support of the Chinese government is to risk the domination of China by Stalin. Our government has taken that risk with the implication that at some future date we will give the Chinese government sufficient support to enable it to handle its economic and financial problems and to deal effectively with the Chinese Red Army. If we do not, the 400 million Chinese eventually will be controlled by Stalin.

Greece, Turkey, France, China — how many more nations will need our help? There may be many more, and within the limits of our abilities, for our own self-defense, we must help them to resist Soviet aggression. They are our allies in Stalin's undeclared war against us. And let us not imagine that even Stalin's death would stop that war. As long as the Soviet Union remains a totalitarian dictatorship, controlled by men who, of their own volition, deliberately and consciously, have chosen to declare themselves the enemies of all peoples who live in freedom, Soviet forces, armed and secret, will continue to strive to seize strategic positions from which to attack us, Soviet spies and agents will be active in all the great centers of our country, in our labor unions, in our government. There will be no true peace on earth but only an armistice as long as a privileged and persecuting caste of Communists controls the peoples of the Soviet Union. Their

objective is the conquest of the world for Communism and peace to them is merely a period in which to prepare new aggressions.

How then is it possible to say honestly that President Truman's policy of supporting "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures" may bring us to peace? War is not inevitable. But our only chance to avoid war with the Soviet Union lies in the possibility that now, when we are far stronger than the USSR, we shall have the foresight, energy and courage to prevent Stalin from dominating new strategic areas and more peoples, and shall ourselves organize the free peoples of the world to resist Soviet imperialism, so that the present inferiority of the Soviet Union will become permanent. We can build up such moral and physical force against the totalitarian dictatorship of the Soviet Union, that when it has succeeded in manufacturing the atomic bomb it will not dare to use it. But until the day when the Soviet peoples control their own government, they will not be permitted by their masters to live with us as fellow citizens of a united world. Until that day we can preserve our independence and peace only by keeping the Soviet dictator constantly confronted by superior force.

That force must be not merely military, economic and financial but also the force of ideas. We have had freedom for so many years, we have lived so long under a Bill of Rights

honestly enforced, that we are apt to forget that the idea of freedom is the most explosive force in the world of politics. All men hate to live under the eye and hand of an omnipotent secret police. Tyranny, whether it be called by the name of Communism or fascism, or by any other name, is loathed by all normal men and women. There is nothing new in the issue which the Communists have raised. It is the old, old issue between freedom and slavery. The world of western democracy today confronts the same menace of Asiatic tyranny which 2500 years ago confronted the democracy of Athens.

#### VIII

To find the principles and doctrines with which to conquer in the world of ideas the lies and twisted half-truths of the Communists we do not have to look further than the Gospels, our Bill of Rights or Lincoln's speech at Independence Hall, in which he asked himself what great principle or idea had held our union of states together, and answered: "It was . . . that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance."

That is the promise of American life. That is what we have to defend, and to offer to the world. In the field

of ideas, freedom is our atomic bomb.

Before President Truman's speech of March 12, it was not unreasonable for despairing men and women throughout the world to say, "the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." They can no longer reasonably say that; but they can and will continue to question the ability of the government of the United States to conceive and carry out in wise action a long-term foreign policy toward the world as a whole. Too often in the past our actions in foreign affairs have been mere convulsive reactions to domestic political expediency, submissions to pressure groups, devices to gather votes, not integral parts of a carefully thought-out plan to defend the vital interests of the people of the United States — the chief of which is the achievement of a world of freedom and peace. We can no longer afford to play domestic politics with foreign policy. Our country is in danger. And insofar as possible our foreign policy must be American and not Democratic or Republican. The present cooperation of the Republican leaders in the Senate with President Truman is admirable, and our government should do everything possible to extend and strengthen collaboration between our great political parties in the preparation of foreign policy.

But even that will not be enough to carry to success our effort to stop the aggressions of Soviet imperialism. The conduct of foreign affairs like the conduct of war is not an exact science.

But on the basis of knowledge, information and experience, it is as possible to predict and counter the moves of an enemy in the field of foreign affairs as in the field of war. Carefully prepared, comprehensive plans, in which means are fitted to ends, are no less necessary in foreign affairs than in war. Our soldiers, sailors and aviators were able to act as successfully as they did in World War II not only because of their personal qualities, but also because they were fighting in accordance with carefully thought-out plans which had been tested again and again in war games. The War Plans sections of our Army and Navy Departments have long been the vital core of those services. But no planning division of any sort has ever existed in our Department of State. In consequence, decisions of great importance have often been made in accordance with the whims of individuals, and major decisions have often depended on nothing more than the accident that at the moment one or another individual happened to have access to the ear of a President.

A planning staff in the Department of State is essential for success. A clear policy, based on our national interests must be adopted, and all men handling our foreign policy must be obliged to follow it or be dismissed from government service. Fortunately, General Marshall, in addition to other great qualities, has an orderly

mind, is accustomed to give his orders on the basis of meticulously prepared plans, and it should be congenial to him not only to set up a planning division in the Department of State, but also to draw into his planning the Army, Navy and Treasury Departments. The problem of stopping the assaults of Soviet imperialism is one not only of diplomacy but also of armed force and finance.

All Americans who are not in the government have also their part to play. Our government is the servant of the American people. It can do nothing effective in the present world crisis unless we will that it act effectively and give it the means to act effectively.

We have lived so long in freedom, in Christian civilization, that we find it difficult to believe that men who have the great qualities of the Russians can be driven by their Communist masters to an assault on all that we hold dear. But it is so. And if we do not face the enemy now, realizing that he is strong, that he will use any means to gain his ends, that he is subtle, cruel, and without knowledge of truth, honor, mercy, or loving kindness, we shall be too late to save even ourselves.

As Edmund Burke said, in his great speech on the Conciliation of America: "When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."

# A RHINOCEROS, SOME LADIES AND A HORSE

A STORY

BY JAMES STEPHENS

ONE DAY, in my first job, a lady fell in love with me. It was quite unreasonable, of course, for I wasn't wonderful: I was small and thin, and I weighed much the same as a largish duck-egg. I didn't fall in love with her, or anything like that. I got under the table, and stayed there until she had to go wherever she had to go to.

I had seen an advertisement — "Smart boy wanted," it said. My legs were the smartest things about me, so I went there on the run. I got the job.

At that time there was nothing on God's earth that I could do, except run. I had no brains, and I had no memory. When I was told to do anything I got into such an enthusiasm about it that I couldn't remember anything else about it. I just ran as hard as I could, and then I ran back, proud and panting. And when they asked me for the whatever-it-was that I had run for, I started, right on the instant, and ran some more.

The place I was working at was, amongst other things, a theatrical agency. I used to be sitting in a corner of the office, waiting to be told to run

somewhere and back. A lady would come in — a music-hall lady that is — and, in about five minutes, howls of joy would start coming from the inner office. Then, peacefully enough, the lady and my two bosses would come out, and the lady always said, "Splits! I can do splits like no one. Look!" And thereupon she did a split right there on the office floor. And one of my bosses would say, "I'm keeping your splits in mind." And the other would add, gallantly, "No one who ever saw your splits could ever forget 'em."

One of my bosses was thin, and the other one was fat. My fat boss was composed entirely of stomachs. He had three baby-stomachs under his chin: then he had three more descending in ever larger englobings nearly to the ground: but, just before reaching the ground, the final stomach bifurcated into a pair of boots. He was very light on these and could bounce about in the neatest way.

He was the fattest thing I have ever seen, except a rhinoceros that I had met in the Zoo the Sunday

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JAMES STEPHENS is the well-known Irish poet and novelist who first achieved recognition with the publication of *The Crock of Gold*, which won the Polignac Prize in 1912.

before I got my job. That rhino was *very* fat, and it had a smell like twenty-five pigs. I was standing outside its palisade, wondering what it could possibly feel like to be a rhinoceros, when two larger boys passed by. Suddenly they caught hold of me, and pushed me through the bars of the palisade. I was very skinny, and in about two seconds I was right inside, and in three seconds the two boys were running away, and the rhinoceros was looking at me.

It was very fat, but it wasn't fat like stomachs, it was fat like barrels of cement, and when it moved it creaked a lot, like a woman I used to know who creaked like an old bedstead. The rhinoceros swaggled over to me with a bunch of cabbage sticking out of its mouth. It wasn't angry, or anything like that, it just wanted to see who I was. Rhinos are blindish: they mainly see by smelling, and they smell in snorts. This one started at my left shoe, and snorted right up that side of me to my ear. He smelt that very carefully: then he switched over to my right ear, and snorted right down that side of me to my right shoe: then he fell in love with my shoes and began to lick them. I, naturally, wriggled my feet at that, and the big chap was so astonished that he did the strangest step-dance backwards to his pile of cabbages, and began to eat them.

I squeezed myself out of his cage and walked away. In a couple of minutes I saw the two boys. They were very frightened, and they asked

me what I had done to the rhinoceros. I answered, a bit grandly, perhaps, that I had seized it in both hands, ripped it limb from limb, and tossed its carcass to the crows. But when they began shouting to people that I had just murdered a rhinoceros I took to my heels, for I didn't want to be arrested and hanged for a murder that I hadn't committed.

## II

Still, a man can't be as fat as a rhinoceros, but my boss was as fat as a man can be. One day a great lady of the halls came in, and was received on the knee. She was very great. Her name was Maudie Darling, or thereabouts. My bosses called her nothing but "Darling," and she called them the same. When the time came for her to arrive the whole building got palpitations of the heart. After waiting a while my thin boss got angry, and said — "Who does the woman think she is? If she isn't here in two twos I'll go down to the entry, and when she does come I'll boot her out." The fat boss said — "She's only two hours late, she'll be here before the week's out."

Within a few minutes there came great clamors from the court-yard. Patriotic cheers, such as Parnell himself never got, were thundering. My bosses ran instantly to the inner office. Then the door opened, and the lady appeared.

She was very wide, and deep, and magnificent. She was dressed in camels and zebras and goats: she had two

peacocks in her hat and a rabbit muff in her hand, and she strode among these with prancings.

But when she got right into the room and saw herself being looked at by three men and a boy she became shy: one could see that she had never been looked at before.

"O," said she, with a smile that made three and a half hearts beat like one, "O," said she, very modestly, "is Mr. Which-of-'em-is-it really in? Please tell him that Little-Miss-Me would be so glad to see and to be —"

Then the inner door opened, and the large lady was surrounded by my fat boss and my thin boss. She crooned to them — "O, you dear boys, you'll never know how much I've thought of you and longed to see you."

That remark left me stupefied. The first day I got to the office I heard that it was the fat boss' birthday, and that he was thirty years of age: and the thin boss didn't look a day younger than the fat one. How the lady could mistake these old men for boys seemed to me the strangest fact that had ever come my way. My own bet was that they'd both die of old age in about a month.

After a while they all came out again. The lady was helpless with laughter: she had to be supported by my two bosses — "O," she cried, "you boys will kill me." And the bosses laughed and laughed, and the fat one said — "Darling, you're a scream," and the thin one said — "Darling, you're a riot."

And then . . . she saw me! I saw her seeing me the very way I had seen the rhinoceros seeing me: I wondered for an instant would she smell me down one leg and up the other. She swept my two bosses right away from her, and she became a kind of queen, very glorious to behold: but sad, startled. She stretched a long, slow arm out and out and out, and then she unfolded a long, slow finger, and pointed it at me — "Who is THAT?" she whispered in a strange whisper that could be heard two miles off.

My fat boss was an awful liar — "The cat brought that in," said he.

But the thin boss rebuked him: "No," he said, "it was not the cat. Let me introduce you; darling, this is James. James, this is the darling of the gods."

"And of the pit," said she, sternly.

She looked at me again. Then she sank to her knees and spread out both arms to me —

"Come to my boozalum, angel," said she in a tender kind of way.

I knew what she meant, and I knew that she didn't know how to pronounce that word. I took a rapid glance at the area indicated. The lady had a boozalum you could graze a cow on. I didn't wait one second, but slid, in one swift, silent slide, under the table. Then she came forward and said a whole lot of poems to me under the table, imploring me, among a lot of odd things, to "come forth, and gild the morning with my eyes," but at last she was reduced to whistling

at me with two fingers in her mouth, the way you whistle for a cab.

I learned after she had gone that most of the things she said to me were written by a poet fellow named Spokeshave. They were very complimentary, but I couldn't love a woman who mistook my old bosses for boys, and had a boozalum that it would take an Arab chieftain a week to trot across on a camel.

The thin boss pulled me from under the table by my leg, and said that my way was the proper way to treat a rip, but my fat boss said, very gravely — "James, when a lady invites a gentleman to her boozalum a real gentleman hops there as pronto as possible, and I'll have none but real gentlemen in this office."

"Tell me," he went on, "what made that wad of Turkish Delight fall in love with you?"

"She didn't love me at all, sir," I answered.

"No?" he enquired.

"She was making fun of me," I explained.

"There's something in that," said he seriously, and went back to his office.

I had been expecting to be sacked that day. I was sacked the next day, but that was about a horse.

### III

I had been given three letters to post, and told to run or they'd be too late. So I ran to the post office and round it and back, with, naturally, the three letters still in my pocket. As I came

to our door a nice, solid, red-faced man rode up on a horse. He thrust the reins into my hand —

"Hold the horse for a minute," said he.

"I can't," I replied, "my boss is waiting for me."

"I'll only be a minute," said he angrily, and he walked off.

Well, there I was, saddled, as it were, with a horse. I looked at it, and it looked at me. Then it blew a pint of soap-suds out of its nose and took another look at me, and then the horse fell in love with me as if he had just found his long-lost foal. He started to lean against me and to woo me with small whinneys, and I responded and replied as best I could —

"Don't move a toe," said I to the horse, "I'll be back in a minute."

He understood exactly what I said, and the only move he made was to swing his head and watch me as I darted up the street. I was less than half a minute away anyhow, and never out of his sight.

Up the street there was a man, and sometimes a woman, with a barrow, thick-piled with cabbages and oranges and apples. As I raced round the barrow I pinched an apple off it at full speed, and in ten seconds I was back at the horse. The good nag had watched every move I made, and when I got back his eyes were wide open, his mouth was wide open, and he had his legs all splayed out so that he couldn't possibly slip. I broke the apple in halves and popped one half



into his mouth. He ate it in slow crunches, and then he looked diligently at the other half. I gave him the other half, and, as he ate it, he gurgled with cidery gargles of pure joy. He then swung his head round from me and pointed his nose up the street, right at the apple-barrow.

I raced up the street again, and was back within the half-minute with another apple. The horse had nigh finished the first half of it when a man who had come up said, thoughtfully —

"He seems to like apples, bedad!"

"He loves them," said I.

And then, exactly at the speed of lightning, the man became angry, and invented bristles all over himself like a porcupine —

"What the hell do you mean," he hissed, and then he bawled, "by stealing my apples?"

I retreated a bit into the horse —

"I didn't steal your apples," I said.

"You didn't!" he roared, and then he hissed, "I saw you," he hissed.

"I didn't steal them," I explained, "I pinched them."

"Tell me that one again," said he.

"If," said I patiently, "if I took the apples for myself that would be stealing."

"So it would," he agreed.

"But as I only took them for the horse that's pinching."

"Be damn, but!" said he. "'Tis a real argument," he went on, staring at the sky. "Answer me that one," he demanded of himself, and he in a very stupor of intellection. "I give it up,"

he roared, "you give me back my apples."

I placed the half apple that was left into his hand, and he looked at it as if it was a dead frog —

"What'll I do with that?" he asked.

"Give it to the horse," said I.

The horse was now prancing at him, and mincing at him, and making love at him. He pushed the half apple into the horse's mouth, and the horse mumbled it and watched him, and chewed it and watched him, and gurgled it and watched him —

"He does like his bit of apple," said the man.

"He likes you too," said I. "I think he loves you."

"It looks like it," he agreed, for the horse was yearning at him, and its eyes were soulful.

"Let's get him another apple," said I, and, without another word, we both pounded back to his barrow and each of us pinched an apple off it. We got one apple into the horse, and were breaking the second one when a woman said gently —

"Nice, kind, Christian gentlemen, feeding dumb animals — with my apples," she yelled suddenly.

The man with me jumped as if he had been hit by a train —

"Mary," said he humbly.

"Joseph," said she in a completely unloving voice.

But the woman transformed herself into nothing else but woman —

"What about my apples?" said she.

"How many have we lost?"

"Three," said Joseph.

"Four," said I, "I pinched three and you pinched one."

"That's true," said he. "That's exact, Mary. I only pinched one of our apples."

"You only," she squealed —

And I, hoping to be useful, broke in —

"Joseph," said I, "is the nice lady your boss?"

He halted for a dreadful second, and then made up his mind —

"You bet she's my boss," said he, "and she's better than that, for she's the very wife of my bosum."

She turned to me —

"Child of Grace —" said she —

Now, when I was a child, and did something that a woman didn't like she always expostulated in the same way. If I tramped on her foot, or jabbed her in the stomach — the way women have multitudes of feet and stomachs is always astonishing to a child — the remark such a woman made was always the same. She would grab her toe or her stomach, and say — "Childagrace, what the hell are you doing?" After a while I worked it out that Childagrace was one word, and was my name. When any woman in agony yelled Childagrace I ran right up prepared to be punished, and the woman always said, tenderly, "What are you yowling about, Childagrace?"

"Childagrace," said Mary earnestly, "how's my family to live if you steal our apples? You take my livelihood away from me! Very good, but will you feed and clothe and educate my

children in," she continued proudly, "the condition to which they are accustomed?"

I answered that question cautiously —

"How many kids have you, ma'am?" said I.

"We'll leave that alone for a while," she went on. "You owe me two and six for the apples."

"Mary!" said Joseph, in a pained voice.

"And you," she snarled at him, "owe me three shillings. I'll take it out of you in pints." She turned to me —

"What do you do with all the money you get from the office here?"

"I give it to my landlady."

"Does she stick to the lot of it?"

"Oh, no," I answered, "she always gives me back threepence."

"Well, you come and live with me and I'll give you back fourpence."

"All right," said I.

#### IV

"By gum," said Joseph, enthusiastically, "that'll be fine. We'll go out every night, and we won't steal a thing. We'll just pinch legs of beef, and pig's feet, and barrels of beer —"

"Wait now," said Mary. "You stick to your own landlady. I've trouble enough of my own. You needn't pay me the two and six."

"Good for you," said Joseph heartily, and then, to me —

"You just get a wife of your bosum half as kind as the wife of my bosum and you'll be set up for life. Mary,"

he cried joyfully, "let's go and have a pint on the strength of it."

"You shut up," said she.

"Joseph," I interrupted, "knows how to pronounce that word properly."

"What word?"

"The one he used when he said you were the wife of his what-you-may-call-it."

"I'm not the wife of any man's what-you-may-call-it," said she, indignantly — "Oh, I see what you mean! So he pronounced it well, did he?"

"Yes, ma'am."

She looked at me very sternly —

"How does it come you know about all these kinds of words?"

"Yes," said Joseph, and he was even sterner than she was, "when I was your age I didn't know any bad words."

"You shut up," said she, and continued, "what made you say that to me?"

"A woman came into our office yesterday, and she mispronounced it."

"What did she say now?"

"Oh, she said it all wrong."

"Do you tell me so? We're all friends here: what way did she say it, son?"

"Well, ma'am, she called it booza-lum."

"She said it wrong all right," said Joseph, "but 'tis a good, round, fat kind of a word all the same."

"You shut up," said Mary. "Who did she say the word to?"

"She said it to me, ma'am."

"She must have been a rip," said Joseph.

"Was she a rip, now?"

"I don't know, ma'am, I never met a rip."

"You're too young yet," said Joseph, "but you'll meet them later on. I never met a rip myself until I got married — I mean," he added hastily, "that they were all rips except the wife of my what-do-you-call-ems, and that's why I married her."

"I expect you've got a barrel-full of rips in your past," said she bleakly, "you must tell me about some of them tonight."

And then, to me, "tell us about the woman," said she.

So I told them all about her, and how she held out her arms to me, and said, "Come to my booza-lum, angel."

"What did you do when she shoved out the old arms at you?" said Joseph.

"I got under the table," I answered.

"That's not a bad place at all, but," he continued earnestly, "never get under the bed when there's an old girl chasing you, for that's the worst spot you could pick on. What was the strap's name?"

"Maudie Darling, she called herself."

"You're a blooming lunatic," said Joseph, "she's the loveliest thing in the world, barring," he added hastily, "the wife of my blast-the-bloody-word."

"We saw her last night," said Mary, "at Dan Lowrey's Theatre, and she's just lovely."

"She isn't as nice as you, ma'am," I asserted.

"Do you tell me that now?" said she.

"You are twice as nice as she is, and twenty times nicer."

"There you are," said Joseph, "the very words I said to you last night."

"You shut up," said Mary scornfully, "you were trying to knock a pint out of me! Listen, son," she went on, "we'll take all that back about your landlady. You come and live with me, and I'll give you back sixpence a week out of your wages."

"All right, ma'am," I crowed in a perfectly monstrous joy.

"Mary," said Joseph, in a reluctant voice —

"You shut up," said she.

"He can't come to live with us," said Joseph. "He's a bloody Prodestan," he added sadly.

"Why —" she began —

"He'd keep me and the childer up all night, pinching apples for horses and asses, and reading the bible, and up to every kind of devilment."

Mary made up her mind quickly —

"You stick to your own landlady," said she, "tell her that I said she was to give you sixpence." She whirled about, "There won't be a thing left on that barrow," said she to Joseph.

"Damn the scrap," said Joseph violently.

"Listen," said Mary to me very earnestly, "am I nicer than Maudie Darling?"

"You are, ma'am," said I.

Mary went down on the road on her knees: she stretched out both arms to me, and said —

"Come to my booalum, angel."

I looked at her, and I looked at Joseph, and I looked at the horse. Then I turned from them all and ran into the building and into the office. My fat boss met me —

"Here's your five bob," said he. "Get to hell out of here," said he.

And I ran out.

I went to the horse, and leaned my head against the thick end of his neck, and the horse leaned as much of himself against me as he could manage. Then the man who owned the horse came up and climbed into his saddle. He fumbled in his pocket —

"You were too long," said I. "I've been sacked for minding your horse."

"That's too bad," said he: "that's too damn bad," and he tossed me a penny.

I caught it, and lobbed it back into his lap, and I strode down the street the most outraged human being then living in the world.



# CHIANG KAI-SHEK

BY GEORGE MOORAD

CHIANG KAI-SHEK is a great man. He is a great patriot." This terse judgment on China's dictator may have been meant as irony, for it was spoken by Marshal Stalin during the course of a wartime conversation with General Patrick Hurley, who was at that time a special envoy of President Roosevelt in the Far East. Marshal Stalin has, of course, no reason to be unduly sentimental or complimentary about his opposite number in China, who directed the so-called "white massacre" of 1926-27 in which thousands of Communists and their followers perished, and to which the deadly dichotomy now splitting China must be traced. But the ruler of all the Russias must of necessity be a good judge of men; and whether he was indulging his sense of humor or not, his statement on Chiang is more than accurate description: it is the key to the man who said in the crucial year of 1941: "You think it is important that I have kept the Japanese from expanding during these years. . . . I tell you it is more important

that I have kept the Communists from spreading. The Japanese are a disease of the skin; the Communists are a disease of the heart."

Chiang's undiluted nationalistic patriotism has long been a central fact in United States policy on China. It explains why our weight was thrown against him when he was a young warlord fighting to broaden the area of his control in a splintered China; why we later supported him against the Japanese during the war; and why, after failing to make peace between Chiang's Central government and the Chinese Communists, we appear to be on the point of abandoning China at a time when Chiang has elected to take his exhausted country into civil war because he cannot compromise with Communism.

And it is Chiang's nationalism which explains why this unyielding dictator — Kai-shek means "Immovable Stone" and is the name he chose for himself when he was an unpopular student at the Japanese Imperial Staff

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**GEORGE MOORAD** was a press and radio correspondent in Moscow during the war, and later observed at first hand the Red Army occupations of Rumania and Manchuria. His account of his experiences as a correspondent with the Russians, Behind the Iron Curtain, was published last fall by the Fireside Press. He was the author of "The Rape of Manchuria," which appeared in the March 1947 AMERICAN MERCURY.

College in Tokyo—is considered irreplaceable by the Chinese even though in fifteen years of civil strife he killed as many of his countrymen as did the Japanese, and even though he heads a governing group which has set a new low in corruption and mismanagement. Everything else that one can say about Chiang must be considered secondary to this nationalism, which has guided him since he made himself the inheritor of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolution.

Chiang Kai-shek grew to manhood at a time when a once great and highly civilized nation was falling into disintegration. The ancient Middle Kingdom of the Manchu dynasty had become the captive of barbarians who peddled opium and quarreled with one another over their respective spheres of influence. Russia, Germany, France, Britain and even Portugal had gnawed off their own spheres of influence; then they had proceeded to carve up the entire body, until America stepped in with the declaration of the Open Door, which gave equal carving rights to all.

Dr. Sun dreamed of a unified, democratic China. His outlook was international. He sought help for an independent China from America, Britain and Japan, and was refused by all. He then proposed that England, France, Germany, Italy and some of the lesser Treaty Powers should consent to a joint intervention in China for a tutelage period of five years. This, too, was refused. Sun finally turned to the young Soviet

Union, and was finally able to announce in January 1923: "China no longer looks to the West for assistance. We now look to the Soviet Union."

The old intellectual, international-minded Dr. Sun was willing to trust his revolution to the pure hearts of foreign helpers. Chiang Kai-shek, the disciplined, nationalistic soldier, was sly and wary of foreigners. Chiang's nationalism is like Stalin's: hard and suspicious, always ready to trade good-will for expedience.

Chiang Kai-shek contracted his military habits in Japan, and it led him to build China's first disciplined army with a loyal officer corps. A year in Moscow, 1923-24, taught him the revolutionary techniques which he used so effectively in the fighting to unite China under the revolution.

Dr. Sun died in 1925, a prisoner to his Soviet commitments. Secretly he had been negotiating for American or British deliverance, but he agreed to a deathbed ceremony in the best Lenin tradition; his "People's Will," said to have been authored by Wang Ching-wei, then a left-wing intellectual, did not renounce the tie with the Soviets. That was left to Chiang Kai-shek.

Russia was then in no position to intervene in the purge which Chiang Kai-shek subsequently instituted, but the Chinese Communists were by no means eradicated. Some leaders fled to Russia, where they were harbored until 1945, and thousands of the rank-and-file fled with Mao Tse-tung into Kiangsi province, in the very center of China. Here they survived—"a

state within a state" the Communist régime was called by a League of Nations committee in 1929 — with a persistence equalled only by Chiang Kai-shek himself.

## II

Chiang's bitterest enemies admit that he is the glue which makes China something more than a geographical expression. In a land where nothing is absolute and nothing final, he managed, by blending compromise, shrewd generosity and unsentimental surgery, to bring into a whole what had been a confusing patchwork of warlords, opium gangsters, bankers and intellectuals.

Chiang is a master at the game of "silver bullets" — the game in which armies politely change sides. One of his favorite, eminently Chinese, tricks is to emasculate provincial leaders by stripping them of their private armies and sending them to command new groups in distant provinces. This is tantamount to exiling from his seat of power a man formerly able to ignore or intimidate the Nanking government, and it does not always please a province to inherit a foreign governor. But it does more: it has become a useful tactic in the campaign to break down the ancient provincial barriers and spread the thought and fact of national government across China. Chiang opened his military academy at Whampoa by insisting that only Mandarin, the court language of the old Empire, be spoken by the cadets, and the fact that Mandarin is now

used, or at least understood, by somebody in every crossroads village is in part a tribute to the Generalissimo.

In December 1936 Chiang was kidnaped at Sian by warlord and Communist leaders who believed that the Generalissimo's superhuman patience with the Japanese was traitorous. Unarmed, badly injured in a fall while trying to escape, the tiny Generalissimo coldly dared his captors to shoot him, refused to talk with them for three days while he stolidly read his Bible, and then gave them a tongue-lashing. Not only did the kidnapers agree to spare his life, merely on his promise that he would lead a coalition of all Chinese into battle with the enemy on his own terms and in his own time, but the Generalissimo returned to power, bringing with him his chief captor, Young Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang, as a voluntary captive. Awed and frightened, the Young Marshal declared:

I am by nature rustic, surly and unpolished, as a result of which I have created an impudent and law-breaking incident. Blushing with shame, I have followed you to the capital in order to receive from you appropriate punishment. Whatever is best for the state, I will not evade if I have to die ten thousand deaths.

Chiang Kai-shek's sense of timing led him to announce that he resigned all his posts: "I am failing in both mind and body," he said.

His twice-repeated resignations were refused, and Chiang returned to his tasks with the adoration of Chinese



who had never dreamed of patriotism before. Six months later, the Japanese drove into Peking. From July 7, 1937 until the end of the Pacific War the Chinese Communists made no personal attacks upon the man who was now undisputably China's leader.

It is fascinating to speculate what this frail strategist might have accomplished with his hated enemy, Stalin, if he had been able to bargain with him as an equal, say with Mr. Roosevelt's authority at any of the Big Three meetings. Chiang has demonstrated all of Stalin's cunning, more than his stubbornness and courage, and he has also a genius for compromise which makes his victories look like sheer generosity. Stalin could not rest until Trotsky was assassinated. Chiang forgave the man who kidnaped and nearly killed him, and treated him as a stern parent might. Other rivals, like the ineffectual Generals Chen Chi-tang and Feng Yu-hsiang, he pensioned off, while others, like Marshals Pai Chung-hsi and Li Tsung-jen, became his valued aides. Chiang spared the famous rebel scholar, Dr. Hu Shih, whom he had once marked for assassination, but who lived to become ambassador to the United States.

The two dictators have never met and the hatred between them is monumental, but apparently they understand each other thoroughly. For many years they conducted negotiations which, before the end of the war was in sight, were never to China's disadvantage. Though Chiang

made no secret of his deep hatred of Communism, Moscow kept urging on him in 1937, for some months before the Japanese struck, a joint military treaty which specifically provided that Russia would give no aid to the Chinese Communists if Chiang would agree not to make an anti-Communist pact with any outside power, which obviously meant Japan.

### III

It is an old custom in China, inherited from the days of the Treaty Ports, to play off one "foreign devil" against another and thereby save at least something for the Chinese. Chiang Kai-shek, believing that the Chinese Communists are no less "foreign" than the Japanese or the Americans or the British, estimated a long time ago that Anglo-American imperialism had neither the virility nor the indigenous appeal of Communism as a threat to the China he hoped to build, and therefore he concluded that China's independence could be achieved by first killing off the Communists and then squeezing out the imperialists. (He might have been right, too, had it not been for the fact that the USSR fought for six days in the Pacific War and so gained a voice and power in Allied decisions in the Far East.)

American policy in China during and after the war was based on the following beliefs:

1. That all previous Pacific history was superseded by Pearl Harbor.

2. That Chiang Kai-shek's fight with Communism was a purely domestic issue.
3. That a paper declaration of independence solves everything.

We are still not entirely convinced that any of these fairy tales is wrong; we are only disheartened because neither Chiang Kai-shek nor the Communists will accept them.

Chiang's most lasting contribution to modern China, the very beginnings of unity, was fashioned at a time when American influence in the Orient was small, and that little was not with him. Bankers and investors favored Chiang as an antidote to Communism, but they could not approve the raids on rival warlords which finally brought all China under his government at Nanking. They protested bitterly as he attacked their old happy hunting grounds, the Treaty Ports, the International Settlements with their local laws and privileges, the preferential duties and all the chains of inequality that made China, as the Generalissimo put it, "a sub-colony of imperialism."

The Sino-American military alliance in the Pacific War was bound to be an unhappy one, if only for technological reasons. The Americans perceived that it was an impossibility for Chiang to fight a powerful outside foe with only half his strength while he husbanded the other half to contain or blockade his Communist countrymen. It was assigned to sharp-tongued "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell to

confront the Generalissimo with a brutal ultimatum — unite with the Communists or else — which resulted only in General Stilwell's losing his American Army command in China. There took place at that time a weird scrambling of high-level instructions, mixed with palace gossip, between the White House and Chungking; Chiang flew into one of his mad rages and declared semi-publicly that he would break off the American alliance, retreat to the hills of Szechwan and fight alone as he had done for so many years before Pearl Harbor.

Stilwell was banished from China on October 20, 1944, and a few months later the whole balance of Asiatic power was upset at the Yalta Conference. Although the Americans did not seem to recognize it, from Yalta onward the Chinese Communists were never again in a defensive position. They were not required to surrender their independent armies or autonomous provinces, which was Chiang's price for the coalition government and the social and political reforms demanded by the Communists. After Yalta, time was on the side of Communism.

During the war we gave far too little thought to China's economic plight. A torrent of money, supplies and intricate equipment was poured into a country which had been brought in a century of oppression and exploitation and war to moral and economic degradation. For the unbelievable waste and corruption which ensued certainly much blame must

fall on the Generalissimo's one-man government, his family and his avaricious lieutenants. But America's naïveté and irresponsibility played a large part. The unhappy United States Marines in North China used to say: "Pearl Buck will cost us more than Pearl Harbor."

It was true. Our military and post-war policies in China were formulated with complete disregard for the realities of a backward, impoverished, sprawling country which did not have the personnel, communications, civic consciousness or individual honesty to pull itself together. Our high-level envoys, soldiers and UNRRA workers went into China expecting to see Pearl Buck's patriot farmers, heroic students and unselfish intellectuals working shoulder-to-shoulder, building the Burma Road and airports with their bare hands. They were bemused by the vision of Pearl Buck's kindly sages murmuring: "Within the four seas all men are brothers." They were therefore horrified by the absolute cruelties of Oriental economy. They saw peasant boys being dragged into the ranks with ropes around their necks, and in Burma and Indo-China they watched with horror while sick and wounded soldiers were left to die. Wherever they went they encountered the poisonous squeeze or graft which infects all of China.

The result was that many Americans came away with a dislike for everything Chinese. To the GIs Chiang Kai-shek became Chancre Jack; Dr. Sun Yat-sen was Sunset

Sam; and all Chinese were called slope-heads or slopies. The contrast between Pearl Buck's *Dragon Seed* and the truth of China was overpowering; the exposé will impede Chinese-American understanding for years.

This was not necessary. A good deal could have been avoided by a few hard-boiled lectures to counteract the pleasant maunderings of dreamy novelists. We could have made more use of Americans who had had long experience in China, men who spoke and knew and sincerely liked the Chinese; we had experienced doctors, engineers, traders, missionaries and military men like General Stilwell to win the war and administer the postwar rehabilitation with some semblance of responsibility. But experience and fact were sedulously avoided . . . for all Pacific history had been erased or superseded by Pearl Harbor.

#### IV

As a nationalist, Chiang had no choice but to accept the opportunity offered by American naïveté, and try to govern the territory and accept the responsibilities given over to his control after the war. Chiang's skeletal government at Chungking, which had performed a very poor job of administering Szechwan province, was suddenly handed all of China, Hainan and Formosa, plus the complex, highly organized cities of Shanghai and Tientsin, to say nothing of the problems of Manchuria.

Chiang had to try. It was China's long-awaited chance for independ-

ence. The Generalissimo said on March 12, 1943, when the international treaties of independence were signed:

We must realize that the present opportunity is as rare as once in a thousand years and as critical as hanging a thousand pounds by a hair. . . . In other words, China's past destiny hung on her foreign relations and rested in the hands of foreign imperialism. From here on it lies entirely in the direction of domestic government, squarely in the hands of all our countrymen. . . .

[If the Chinese fail to govern themselves] China's destiny will decline and fall. Not only will she continue in the status of a sub-colony, but also the future generations of Chinese will forever remain like beasts enslaved with no hope of regeneration. So here is the Great Divide in the destiny of China; its issue will be decided in this very period of resistance, inside the next two years.

Chiang had insufficient trained Chinese manpower for his titanic task, and for political reasons he felt that he could not use the European refugees and technical experts who were emerging from Japanese prison camps — the very men who had built and administered the International Settlements, Treaty Ports, the Chinese customs, salt monopoly and harbor patrols.

All this talent he dismissed, and the result was something close to paralysis. There is still no city in China where factories are working, trade is moving and people are eating according to their normally-marginal standards, except for Hong-kong, which is still British-controlled.

This was a lunatic decision, but it was not Chiang's alone. Anti-foreignism is the strongest characteristic of every Chinese patriot, as it is of Chiang the nationalist. It comes from the whole history of China's humiliation and exploitation by a succession of foreign imperialists. Chinese xenophobic feeling, for all the unfailing courtesy of the people, goes much deeper than that of the Japanese, because the regimented islanders were able to copy technological strength, to throw up a façade of Westernism and, for a brief time, to break their bonds. Chinese nationalism has always been sullen and confused and dubious of its own ability. It is too much to expect that sober practicality and technical efficiency could emerge quickly from such a past.

The course of history might have been changed if Chiang had taken part in the Teheran Conference (Stalin objected to his participation) at which the USSR was tentatively promised the Kurile Islands and control of Manchuria and Mongolia. At the subsequent Cairo meeting with Roosevelt and Churchill, Chiang accepted Stalin's proposals. He swapped what would have been at best an uneasy sovereignty over Mongolia, which adjoins the Soviet Union, on the gamble that he might buy off Russia with this huge land grant, and saddled the United States with full responsibility for the treaty, whereby China became fully independent. This, he calculated, would range the United States squarely

against the Soviet Union in the probable event of treaty violations.

The Yalta Conference finally shaped the course of history. Russia was given strategic control of Manchuria as well as Mongolia and so a union between Chinese and Russian Communists was made inevitable. For Chiang that was the signal to return to the tactic of pitting foreign devils against one another.

The Generalissimo's only miscalculation — and even this is not yet certain — was on his assumption that the United States would not decide to withdraw from China. This would mean withdrawal not only of troops and government loans, but of the thousands of teachers, educators, relief workers and businessmen who look out for American interests much more effectively than armed men. Such a decision — which is still possible — would be unadulterated isolationism; it would turn China into a bear garden in the deluded hope that Russia would not intervene.

V

Chiang's visitors find themselves ushered into the presence of a girlish, fastidious-looking figure with an untuious smile; snapping, black beady eyes; and a strong, gaunt head which bobs and ducks nervously while he emits a staccato "*hao, hao,*" — good, good — if his visitor pleases him. When he is crossed he can, like Hitler, become a screaming maniac. He combines in his temperament the vanity of a dictator who is system-

atically lied to by his entourage, the religious faith of a child, the courage of a would-be martyr, the wile and patience of old China, and the ruthlessness of a fanatic.

His youth was hard and poor, lightened only by his widowed mother's faith and sacrifice for his career. He was a loyal son and his mother lived to enjoy the fame and comfort that his success provided. In his years of struggle as an unnoticed soldier, and later as a shabby broker's clerk in Shanghai, he scraped and faithfully remitted money to her, and after his success he paid regular visits to her little village. He now makes pilgrimages to her grave and bows his respects to her in the age-old Chinese fashion, but not to his father.

The scandalmongers have had their innings with the Generalissimo because he put aside a Chekiang village girl, the mother of his two sons, to marry the glamorous Soong Mei-ling, and so became Sun Yat-sen's brother-in-law. Chiang explains that he was married to his first wife in Chinese fashion, at the age of sixteen, and that because of his career almost never lived with her. He is genuinely proud of his two sons, whom he named "Latitude of Nation" and "Longitude of Nation." The eldest son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who either broke with his father over Communism or was thoughtfully planted in Moscow for a ten-year tour of espionage duty, returned to China in 1935 and was then warmly received. He insisted that his father should accompany him for a

reunion with his mother in their native village, and the Generalissimo complied, after securing Mei-ling's permission. The younger son, Chiang Wei-kuo, received his training in a German military school.

There were three concubines to be disposed of when Chiang assumed Mei-ling and Christianity. He did this in the same way he has handled fractious generals, by paying them off and sending them on trips around the world. Chinese communities abroad have occasionally been puzzled by visits of several Madames Chiang Kai-shek.

In late years Chiang has become sanctimonious: he will not smoke or drink and the inevitable gossip about him rouses his wrath. Once the story got around Chungking that during Madame Chiang's absence in America he had been consorting with a young nurse. The Generalissimo summoned cabinet ministers, missionaries and two correspondents while he proclaimed in the presence of Madame Chiang his undying Christian love and complete monogamy.

Chiang's enemies claim that he has got the Bible somewhat confused with *Mein Kampf* and with his own *China's Destiny*. When his conversion to the Methodist church was announced, a cynical American remarked: "Henceforth God Almighty will ride with Chiang in the same military saddle." Chiang, whose creed is an intricate blend of faith in himself, in the Chinese revolution and in the Lord, would probably agree with this. He said once that the best reason in the

world for believing the Bible was that Christ was a great revolutionary. Speaking of his captivity at Sian, he later recounted: "I distinctly recalled the forty days and nights Christ passed in the wilderness, withstanding temptation, His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane and the indignities heaped upon Him at His trial. . . ."

Chiang's interpretation of Christianity has not interfered with the business of dictatorship to any great extent. He can and still does use opium profits to promote the New Life virtues of courtesy, service, honesty and honor. One opium monopolist, who gave the Generalissimo a fighting plane (named "Anti-Opium") was appointed Opium-Suppression Chairman of Kiangsu province, with presumably the power to shoot people who did not stop smoking opium — or perhaps only those who did not handle monopoly drugs.

Recently, in a lecture to a group of radical students, he told them that his heart was "pained" and that he would have to shoot them for any further political infractions. Once during the war he nearly beat to death with his own hands an officer whom he saw forcibly recruiting peasants for the army. When he was reminded of the law of conscription, Chiang summoned the commanding general and had *him* executed. But conscription went on and the Generalissimo still has around him some of the blackest thieves and terrorists in Asia. The cries of liberals and scholars in his concentration camps do not appear to

disturb his concentration on the New Testament.

In essence, Chiang's philosophy seems to be that those who are not with him are against him. However, he has made some definite promises and taken preliminary steps to break up the Kuomintang's monopoly. The first constitutional government in Chinese history is to be inaugurated on December 25, 1947. In preparation for this gigantic step, Chiang announced this past April 18 the formation of what he called "a multi-party State Council, which will direct China's affairs of state during the transitional period." To this State Council he named twelve members of the Kuomintang, four Social Democrats, four members of the Young China party and four Independents.

It is unlikely that this multi-party organ will materially alter the power relations in China. Both the Young China party and the Independents are closely tied to the Kuomintang, and the Social Democrats are an obscure group who carry little weight. Neither the Chinese Communists nor the fellow-traveling China Democratic League are represented on the State Council, since both groups refused to take part in the recent National Assembly.

In the quagmire of Chinese dishonesty, the Generalissimo is called incorruptible. In the personal sense, that is probably true; he has never had the slightest thought of personal gain; in comparison to Marshal Stalin he lives very frugally. But the Gener-

alissimo is so close to fantastic corruption in his own family and among his closest confidants, that he must be considered tainted.

Chiang can reasonably be called a fascist and reactionary, but he is not a totalitarian. His secret police, concentration camps and political suppression are mild and puny facsimiles of the Communist machinery. The babel of any nationalist Chinese city, the existence of spies, agents and anti-government mosquito newspapers prove this. Anti-American demonstrations, mass meetings and student parades are painfully difficult for the government, but they are usually permitted, not because Chiang cannot beat down his non-Communist critics, but because his Chinese method compromises and absorbs opposition.

The Immovable Stone is entering his last and greatest fight, from which he can emerge a dead dictator or a legendary hero to the Chinese people. But it is not Chiang's fate alone in the balance; it is China's independence against foreign domination, whether of the type typified by imperialist British Hong Kong or by Soviet-Russian Dairen. It is as futile to analyze China in terms of Chiang's leanings toward fascism as it is to analyze Chiang in terms of China's corruption and moral degradation. Chiang is today an irreplaceable part of China and what the Chinese call their "national shame": he is the living embodiment of China's pitiful weaknesses, unexpected strengths and fanatic hopes of real independence.



## ARE THE FRENCH IMMORAL?

BY WAVERLEY ROOT

IN WHAT I call my anti-fan, or "pan," mail (that series of frequently abusive and always anonymous penny postcards which all writers on controversial subjects regularly receive), I found recently a specimen which, unlike most of its fellows, sowed seed for thought. Writing about the impact of the American GI on France, I had observed that because most of the feminine contacts of the American soldier in France were with ladies of easy virtue he had "jumped to the conclusion that the French people are immoral." My anonymous correspondent admonished me: "People have been jumping and walking to that conclusion for many years. . . . Don't waste your time whitewashing French morals. Too much evidence against you."

It was that last sentence which set me wondering. Having lived in France for eleven years, I had a high opinion of French morality. Having lived in the United States for thirty (and in England for two), I knew that my opinion was not shared either by Americans or Englishmen. Neither my impression nor the general impres-

sion of Americans depended on any evidence. Perhaps my correspondent was right. Perhaps the evidence *was* contrary to the verdict I had reached on the basis of personal experience. I set to work to dig it up.

The first difficulty in comparing the morals of two nations, I speedily discovered, was that no unattackable definition of morality can be provided. Ideas as to what is honorably permissible vary according to place and have varied according to time. Even if we could agree on what is moral, we would still lack statistics for direct comparison. The best we can do is to agree that there is a fairly close correlation between morality and some matters for which statistics do exist. For instance, in civilized countries areas of higher literacy tend to be also areas of higher morality, while areas where crime is more prevalent tend also to be areas of lower morality. By comparison of factors generally admitted to indicate a greater or lesser degree of morality in a nation we may, therefore, arrive at an indirect comparison of French and American morals.

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WAVERLEY ROOT is a veteran writer, lecturer and radio news analyst. His most recent project is *The Secret History of the War*, of which three volumes have appeared thus far.

We may as well start with the question of literacy.

France is virtually without illiterates. Her school system is thorough, far-reaching, and, age for age, based on higher standards than those which obtain in the United States. This is the result, partly, of the fact that education in France is a national concern (not a local one) administered by a department headed by a cabinet minister, and national standards of education are maintained throughout the country. These standards are far more rigorous than those of the United States. Foreign languages and sciences are studied in grammar schools, not, as with us, only when the high school or junior high level is reached. The French *lycée* is the equivalent of the American high school, so far as the age of its students is concerned; but its graduate earns the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, which our students receive only at the end of their college career. Finally, the French university instructs its students in subjects which in the United States are only reached in post-graduate courses; yet its age level is the same as that obtaining in our undergraduate colleges.

The draft of World War II revealed that the belief which most Americans complacently held, that we were a highly literate people, was inaccurate. Nearly two million men (about 13 per cent of those drafted) had less than a fourth-grade education. In the country at large, more than ten million adult Americans can neither

read nor write. Their numbers are being swelled today by the seven million children of school age who are not in school. So far as literacy and education tend to lift morality, then, France has the advantage.

## II

A country of high morality should enjoy a comparably low crime rate. How does France compare in this respect with the United States?

It is difficult to get fairly comparable sets of figures for the two countries. The same crimes are not always classified in equivalent brackets by French and American authorities. I have gone to some pains to get precise definitions of French classifications and breakdowns of general figures in order to be able to recombine official statistics into classifications corresponding to those used in the United States.

The fairest method seems to be that of computing crime rates per 100,000 population. The closest approach to a national figure which can be obtained for the United States is that provided by the FBI uniform crime reports for the nation, which in 1938 covered 1929 cities with a population of 62,463,295 — less than half the population. Moreover, it was not possible to get figures for the same year from both countries. Whereas for the United States I have taken the figures for the last prewar year, 1938, I have been obliged for France to use the 1934 figures. These years are typical for both countries.

The murder rate in the United States was 55.3 murders per 100,000 population. In France, it was 11.5. The American rate for aggravated assault was 337.3. The French rate was 3.5. As for sexual offenses (and this is the figure which will undoubtedly prove most astonishing to Americans), there were 83 crimes recorded for every 100,000 persons in the United States; in France, only 6.6. In other words, our record is roughly five times as bad as that of the French on murder, one hundred times as bad on assault and twelve times as bad on sexual offenses.

Incidentally, the FBI reported a total of 1,433,812 crimes in the United States for 1938 against a French total, in 1934, of 1404. Even allowing for all possible differences in definitions of crimes, this American record of one thousand times as much crime for a population only three times greater (United States in 1930, 128,429,000; France in 1934, 41,907,056) looks black indeed in comparison with that of France.

Nor are we improving. The FBI noted in its report for 1945 that crime in the United States had increased during the year by 12.4 per cent, the biggest rise in fifteen years. Notable in these figures were the statistics on youth. No fewer than 21 per cent of those arrested during the year were minors. Since 1939, arrests of girls under 18 had increased 198 per cent, of boys of the same age 48 per cent for homicide, 70 per cent for rape, and 72 per cent for assault.

The increase in juvenile delinquency in the United States is attributable, of course, to the war. In spite of the fact that many French homes were disrupted, with children left to shift for themselves, France has been spared the wartime rise in juvenile delinquency which has been so marked here and in some European countries, notably Germany. Complete postwar crime figures are lacking in France, but it appears that France has largely escaped wartime crime-rate increases except in the category of black-market offenses, which are now diminishing.

Alcoholism is another factor which shows a significant correlation with morality, a high rate of alcoholism going hand in hand with a low moral level. In April 1945 the Ministry of Public Health in France issued a study called "The Problem of Alcoholism in France," which, being based on the thesis that alcoholism was a social evil, certainly could not be suspected of any intent to minimize its extent. The highest proportion of alcoholics to the population recorded for any year of this century was given in this document as 8.9 cases per 100,000 of population, for the year 1938. Against this we must set an American figure of roughly 4500 alcoholics per 100,000, more than five hundred times the French figure. This estimate, by Howard W. Haggard and E. M. Jellinek of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology of Yale, is for 1940, when the French figure was 6.7, making the difference

still more striking. Even allowing for possible national differences in the definition of an alcoholic, we must conclude that France is more temperate.

(The American definition, moreover, does not seem to be over-strict. It is part of an estimate which puts the number of regular users of alcoholic beverages in this country at 44,000,000, the number of excessive drinkers at 2,400,000 and that of chronic alcoholics at 600,000.)

The more favorable record of the French for sobriety must be ascribed chiefly to different drinking habits. The average French drinker consumes 90 gallons of wine per year to the American drinker's 1.5 gallons. But wine is customarily drunk with meals, a few glasses at a time, and seldom to the point of drunkenness. When we come to other beverages, the figures shift. The Frenchman drinks 7.5 gallons of beer per year, the American 13. The French drinker consumes a little over 5.5 quarts of "hard liquor" per year while the American consumes 7.5 gallons — roughly five and a half times as much. The American, moreover, tends to take his drinks a good many at a time while the Frenchman tends to spread his out evenly over the year in the form of a single glass of brandy or liqueur at the end of the meal.

### III

But when the average American speaks of French immorality, he is thinking usually of sexual morality.

One might be inclined to dispute his belief on the evidence of the comparative figures on sexual offenses, already quoted above. Additional evidence exists, though it is obviously difficult to unearth reliable statistics on matters about which most persons are reluctant to tell the truth, even to scientific or official investigators.

One indication may be found in the record of illegitimate births. In 1936, the rate in France was 103 such births per 100,000 population. In the United States for the same year it was only 69. Before we draw too hastily the conclusion that unmarried French women succumb more readily to the temptation to indulge in pre- or non-marital sexual relations, however, we should seek figures referring directly to female chastity. These do not exist, so far as I can discover, for France, but, rather surprisingly, they do exist for the United States. Dr. L. M. Terman, in a book entitled *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, reports that before World War I 12 per cent of American women were not virgins at marriage; that during and after that war, the percentage increased to 26 per cent; in the 1922-31 period to 49 per cent; and in 1932-37 to 68 per cent. In the absence of any figures, it is impossible to assert definitely that the record of Frenchwomen for chastity is any better than this, but I believe that anyone who has lived for any length of time in France will agree that it is considerably higher, if only because of the stricter discipline to

which the French family submits its daughters.

If we compare the greater incidence of illegitimate births in France with the probable excess of female unchastity in the United States, we are forced to conclude that the difference represents, not greater virtue on the part of American women, but a different conception of the duty of the man to the woman. The shotgun marriage is not unknown in France and there have been plenty of cases there of "making an honest woman" of one's mistress, but the French are more inclined to regard marriage in these circumstances as compounding one error by another.

The American is likely to argue that this difference in conduct indicates a more upright and moral attitude on the part of the American male. But the Frenchman has an answer. A marriage which has nothing in its favor except an expected and unwelcome parenthood, he will retort, is a hypocritical covering up of a fault. A sin is not canceled because it is legalized.

Finally, the Frenchman will assert that it is his very sense of responsibility concerning marriage which restrains him from entering into so serious a relationship under circumstances which destine it to be terminated by early divorce. In 1936 the American divorce rate was more than three times that of France (1.8 per thousand as against 0.528 for France — with the French rate including the numerous American divorces in

Paris). And the American rate, moreover, is steadily rising.

In short, it would appear that moral responsibility in the matter of sex operates at different stages in the two countries. The American protects the individual at the expense of the institution of marriage; the Frenchman protects the institution at the expense of the individual. It may be suggested that the Frenchman manages to do less harm to the individual than the American to the institution.

#### IV

Another index to the state of sexual morality might be found in the extent to which venereal disease exists in a nation. There is no subject on which it is more difficult to get trustworthy figures. It was no doubt a shock to American citizens to discover during the war that 5 per cent of all men examined for the draft were suffering from venereal disease. I have been unable to obtain the French army rate. We can only fall back, then, on a single comparative figure, that of deaths from this cause in 1930, the only year for which I have been able to get them for both countries. In France there were 433 deaths, in the United States 10,553. This means 8.9 per 100,000 in America, 1.03 per 100,000 in France.

The French explanation of this difference would undoubtedly be that it resulted from their system of legalized but controlled prostitution — which brings us to one of the chief

reasons for the American belief that the French are immoral.

On the subject of prostitution the American perhaps presumes too much virtue for his own country. Most Americans were no doubt surprised to learn that the Army closed "red light" districts in no fewer than six hundred American localities adjacent to training camps during the war. The social evil of prostitution exists in America: we have hidden it more carefully from public view, though it is true that, proportionately, we have less of it to hide.

Prewar Paris was by no means unique in Europe for toleration of prostitution. To my mind, a number of other European capitals outdid Paris in the matter of vice—even London, where that impression was perhaps produced by the extreme unattractiveness of the ladies of the street. Then there was Barcelona, the only city where I have ever been solicited at the unpropitious hour of ten in the morning. There was Naples, where you would not see a woman on the streets at night, but could hardly avoid men anxious to guide you to them.

Above all, there was Berlin, whose prewar night life was certainly the most vicious of Europe. The German capital abounded in establishments devoted to perversions of all kinds, which would have been closed instantly in Paris. I know of no other city where street girls advertised their willingness to submit to flagellation by wearing red-heeled shoes

or where men impersonated women while dancing nude. The night life of Berlin was permeated with a viciousness whose peculiar repulsiveness derived from the humorless, unimaginative, ponderous solemnity from which the German never escaped even in the indulgence of his most esoteric pleasures. To escape from the night life of Berlin to that of Paris was like emerging from the suffocating musty odor of a tropical jungle onto a windswept beach.

The French did not approve of prostitution, and respected neither the women who lived by it nor their exploiters. Of the two, they blamed the women least. But they observed that prostitution had existed for centuries in all parts of the world, whether governments permitted it or attempted to repress it. They believed they could limit its attendant evils—crime and disease—by keeping it in the open, where they could control it, rather than by driving it underground where it would escape regulation.

All this is now past, for the new government of France has outlawed prostitution. This is an indication that the French admire it no more than we do, but prostitution has been made illegal not so much on grounds of morality as on grounds of efficiency. It is a non-essential activity, and France today cannot afford to tolerate the superfluous.

As for the French attitude toward nudity, as demonstrated in moving pictures, the theatre and so forth, it may be suggested that the American

misjudges the Frenchman on that score because his own more puritanical standards endow nudity with a shock-content which intrinsically it does not possess. Frenchmen are not offended when nudity, if the plot calls for it, occurs in entirely serious plays. I recall one French play I saw before the war (its title was *Non, Nous ne nous marierons plus!* but I have forgotten the name of the author), in which a nude model held the stage for the better part of the second act, which took place in an artist's studio.

There is no exact American equivalent for this appearance of nudity on the serious stage, which occurs in France in consequence of the Frenchman's belief, which he shares with artists of all times and nations, that a beautiful human body is a pleasing spectacle. When we reach the music halls, however, we do have a parallel. In Paris in such widely known and, to Americans, exciting productions as those of the Bal Tabarin or the Folies-Bergère, nude showgirls, whose only costume is what the French call a *cache-sexe* and we call a G-string, are a common spectacle. The equivalent is the American burlesque show, in which, depending upon local regulations, women are often displayed quite as completely as the girls of the French stage.

The standardized monotonous presentation of the burlesque show is the striptease, whose very name betrays its purpose. Nudity in the French review is described by a phrase equally

revealing of the mental attitude with which it is approached, *la plastique*, and is often presented with considerable taste and restraint. The violent contortions with which such American burlesque acts frequently end would no doubt shock a Frenchman, unless he were amused by the performance as a naïve example of adolescence delightedly attempting to admire its own wickedness.

It is indicative of the different attitudes of the Frenchman and the American to nudity that GIs provoked a near-riot on the reopening of the Folies-Bergère after the liberation of Paris by storming the dressing rooms of the performers. Thereafter it was necessary to station MPs at all doors between the auditorium and backstage to protect the girls from the enthusiasm of American soldiers. They had never needed protection from Europeans.

Incidents like these tended to strengthen an opinion held in many circles in France—that it is the Americans who are a people of loose morals. General Henri-Honoré Giraud, in the report on the causes of France's defeat which he presented to Marshal Pétain after his return from a German prison camp, attributed it to a moral degeneration in France, and that degeneration he ascribed partly to the bad effect upon the previously moral population of France of evil American ideas brought into the country by the American Expeditionary Forces in the closing years of the first World War.



## V

In spite of the effort of the censors of Hollywood to keep American films prophylactically clean, Frenchmen frequently consider them demoralizing. A popular type of American moving picture, in which the audience is invited to concentrate on relations between the hero and heroine which owe their piquancy to the fact that there is some doubt as to whether they have been properly consecrated by the competent authorities — a doubt always banished, of course, by the production in the end of some legal technicality demonstrating that the couple is legally married — strikes the French as both immature and offensive. The French do not consider morality synonymous with legality. Conduct which seems to the French immoral will continue to seem so to them even though it is demonstrated that it is not legally punishable. The makers of these ingenious Hollywood incitations seem to them to be in the class of little boys scrawling obscene phrases on walls.

If the French judgment of our morals is based too much on their opinion of our burlesque shows and our more nauseating films, it would

likewise seem true, from the figures which have been presented above, that our own widespread conviction of French immorality is equally unjust. The truth is that the French are very much like us, with similar proportions addicted to virtue and to vice, with as keen a desire as ours to follow accepted standards of morality, and with no greater tendency to kick over the traces. The fundamental conceptions of both nations are very much the same.

When we gaze at the Frenchman through American spectacles, we may be shocked by some of the things he accepts as a matter of course because for an American, with his different background and approach, to accept them would be an indication of loose morals. It need not necessarily argue loose morals in the Frenchman. In the same way the French mother who reads of the freedom of American girls incorrectly assumes that they are immoral because in France good girls do not go out with young men unchaperoned. The mistake on both sides is the belief that the other is being regarded as through a window, when actually Americans and French alike are looking into mirrors and seeing chiefly their own reflections.



# DECATUR, ALABAMA—SUCCESS STORY

BY PAUL W. CHAPMAN

DECATUR is a prosperous and progressive county seat located in the rolling cotton country of northern Alabama. Fourteen years ago it was, as its leading citizens put it, the “most busted” community in the South, but recently a visiting reporter dubbed it the “Wonder Town” of the Cotton Belt.

The change was brought about by the application of a simple prosperity formula that increased the incomes of farmers in Decatur’s trade territory, created a balanced farms-and-factory economy, and — most important of all — provided jobs for every person in Morgan County who wanted to work.

Providing work for all the labor force of a rural county in the Cotton South is almost unique; few county seats can offer enough attractive jobs to retain in the community their most productive workers. No major cotton-producing state, because of the predominantly agricultural-labor pattern, with very small farms, has ever provided jobs for all its people. The South’s net loss from intersectional

migration is now estimated at about four million; each year during the war period the South sent an average of three hundred thousand workers to industrial plants in the North and East.

From the standpoint of employment opportunities, Alabama is typical of the Cotton South. Every day during the five-year period prior to 1940 an average of 190 persons moved out of Alabama. They went into every other section of the United States where work was available. Last winter, for example, while interviewing a bulldozer crew in the Redland District below Miami, I asked two boys where they came from — always a proper and logical question anywhere in Florida.

“I came from Alabama and my buddy from Georgia,” replied one of the boys.

“Those two states must have sent a number of people to Florida,” I observed.

“Everybody in Florida who works came either from Alabama or Georgia,” said the boy.

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PAUL W. CHAPMAN has been dean of the College of Agriculture of Georgia University for more than ten years. He is also a member of the editorial staff of the *Progressive Farmer*, the author of several textbooks on agriculture, chairman of agricultural research for the Southern Association of Science and Industry, and a consultant to the U. S. Department of Commerce.

Naturally, this statement was an exaggeration. But it is true that Alabama and Georgia have contributed more than five hundred thousand citizens to Florida's permanent population. In the light of such a migratory record, it is remarkable that Barrett Shelton, editor of the *Decatur Daily*, can print in his newspaper, "No person needs to leave Morgan County to find work. We have jobs for all returning service men and women. And as mechanization releases workers from the land, all can find employment at good wages in Decatur's growing industries."

## II

For the first time in history, high wages are forcing widespread farm mechanization in the Cotton Belt. Last fall cotton growers in northwest Alabama were compelled to pay hand pickers as much as \$60 a bale, but the few who were able to arrange for mechanical picking paid only one third this amount.

Mechanization, long overdue in the only section of the United States that farms with hand and mule labor, will, of course, increase per capita farm earnings. But it will also destroy 1,500,000 farm jobs and reduce the population of every rural county that does not create some new non-farm employment. Economists in the United States Department of Agriculture estimate that five million off-the-farm jobs must be added to the prewar total if the South is to have anything resembling full employment.

It rests upon the small towns to determine the outcome of the major economic adjustment which is required of the South as a whole. The largest cities of the region, even though they are growing faster than large cities in other sections of the nation, can carry but a fraction of the responsibility for providing full employment. Either the typical county seat and other small cities will create payrolls to attract and hold veterans, displaced war-plant workers and families "tractored off" the land, or the South will continue to pour its "Arkies" and "Okies" over the nation to disrupt the economy of other sections.

It seems likely that there will be no "Okies" from Decatur, Alabama, or any other town that adopts its prosperity formula. Decatur's awakening came about 1932, when the price of cotton, its only local cash crop, dropped to five cents a pound. A development program was then instituted to encourage diversified farming. At the time the city did not have a single industry, but by assuming responsibility for marketing all farm products and for manufacturing the supplies and equipment required in diversified agriculture, Decatur stumbled upon the most practical means of creating off-the-farm jobs to open it.

Maynard Layman, who writes a farm column for the *Decatur Daily* and who served for years as chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Decatur Chamber of Commerce, which spearheaded the movement, has

kept a scrapbook record of all developments since the inception of the program. "With five-cent cotton as our only source of income, we were desperate," Layman explains:

A public meeting was called; the chairman asked for suggestions. Someone explained the so-called Moultrie Plan for diversifying farming through providing markets and processing plants. Arrangements were made to send a committee to Moultrie, Georgia, to study the plan. Our people liked the Moultrie program; they were favorably impressed with the slogan — "A Market for Every Farm Product 365 Days a Year." On returning home the group called a second community meeting at which the plan was adopted. We've been working at it ever since.

Because Moultrie had a meat curing plant, this was the first new enterprise promoted at Decatur. A local ice and cold-storage concern was persuaded to go into the business of buying hogs and cattle from local farmers, processing the meat and selling it through local food markets. This concern, Arrow Provisions, is still in business. Last year it paid local farmers \$314,000 for livestock. In addition, it provided industrial jobs for more than thirty workers.

Next, we turned our attention to providing a market for milk; this was a little more difficult. A cheese plant — the first in North Alabama — was established; today there are cheese plants in several towns in this section of the state, including Ardmore, Boaz, Russellville, and Scottsboro.

To start the cheese plant a capital of \$15,000 was required. This money was raised through the sale of small amounts of stock to many people; the largest shareholder had a block of stock which cost \$300. Those who bought the stock were told that they might never get their money back, but fortunately the shares proved to be a very profitable investment. The

cheese plant has been able to pay six per cent dividends; the stock sells above par; it represents ownership of a plant now worth not less than \$75,000.

Alabama Dairy Products buys milk from 950 producers, not one of whom produced milk for sale before the plant was established. Fourteen milk routes are operated. Through an agreement with Consolidated Products Company, whey from the cheese plant is piped to a building nearby where it is reduced to a semi-solid form, packed in barrels, and shipped to producers of livestock and poultry feeds.

During the past year the cheese plant paid farmers \$391,000 for milk. In addition, Grade A distributors in Decatur paid out \$255,000 to producers with whom they had contracts. Local milk and dairy products plants now provide jobs in town for more than 100 workers.

To initiate these enterprises many meetings were held with farmers who were taken into complete confidence with respect to financial operations. They knew, just as we did, that the program was an effort to build a sounder economy for all the people of the community, both town and country.

Catching the spirit of locally-owned business concerns, farmers in the Decatur area have gone into the making and distributing of farm supplies on a big scale. In 1937, the Tennessee Valley Fertilizer Cooperative was organized by local farmers with a paid-in capital of \$10,300. In less than ten years it has earned for its farmer-owners \$237,000 and now has a net worth of about \$225,000. Today the Valley Cooperative owns a modern fertilizer plant worth about \$60,000, which at peak season employs fifty or more people. It is affiliated with eleven cooperatives in nearby

counties, each of which maintains a store and warehouse which do a general supply business. The Decatur plant manufactures fertilizer for about 2500 farmers.

Last year the Cooperative went into the seed business. In a modern plant, built at a cost of \$40,000, all kinds of farm seeds are cleaned, stored and sold. Seed for planting winter cover crops, once imported, is now produced by the farmers of the territory which the plant serves. This year the Cooperative entered the feed business and is now building a mill to cost \$125,000, which will be able to turn out 100 tons of mixed feed in eight hours; the new plant will turn out from fifteen to twenty cars of feed daily. Feed will be distributed through the same cooperative organizations with which the concern is already dealing in selling fertilizer and seed.

### III

Wood is one of the most abundant raw materials in the Southeast; in Alabama and all surrounding states about half the land is devoted to growing trees. Most communities are content to sell their trees just as the logs come from the forest, but not Decatur. Here there are factories that convert wood into cabinets, boats, brooms and other finished articles which create local jobs and add value to the materials used. Six locally-owned industries in Decatur last year paid farmers and landowners in the trade territory \$493,000 for forest products. One of these, the Decatur Box and Basket

Company, employs about seventy-five men and women in the making of containers for fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Nine tenths of Decatur's industries are home-owned, but among its important agricultural industries the Alabama Flour Mill is an exception. The mill, which has the capacity to convert 150,000 bushels of grain into flour and feed each month, is a subsidiary of the Nebraska Flour Mills of Omaha. It came to Decatur in 1941 because the city, located on the Tennessee River, has been made accessible by inland waterways through the work of the TVA. After the nine-foot channel in the Tennessee River had been opened, it was possible to load barges with wheat at Kansas City on the Missouri River, move down the Mississippi, into the Ohio and up the Tennessee to unload at a mill on the waterfront at Decatur. But management of the "foreign" flour mill entered immediately and wholeheartedly into the campaign of Decatur people in making markets for all the farm products grown in the locality.

"Upon establishing our mill in Decatur, we announced that we would buy all the grain offered to us by farmers in the territory," explained A. L. Johnson, general manager:

The first year we were not able to buy any local grain. But each year since, local purchases have increased. During the past season we paid Alabama farmers \$684,000 for wheat, oats, barley, milo and corn.

Located in the nation's highest per capita flour-consuming section, this

mill has succeeded beyond its owners' hopes; its storage and processing facilities will be doubled in the near future. More than two hundred people are now employed at the mill.

Many other agricultural industries play important parts in providing markets for farmers and jobs for industrial workers. Among these are the Decatur Oil Mills, which paid farmers \$2,500,000 for cottonseed, and the Home Oil Mills, which paid \$430,000 for peanuts. Tennessee Valley Farm Industries, a new business, has just completed a poultry dressing plant which will handle 12,000 broilers daily; during the summer and fall it paid farmers about \$170,000 for chickens. Cotton handled in the local market added \$5,000,000 to the bank accounts of farmers in the trade territory.

Several individuals are operating interesting, and in some instances unique, industries and services in Decatur. Five years ago, for example, Dennis McClendon started a harness repair shop on a very small scale. Later he began making leather lines, for which he found a ready sale. Now he operates a more venturesome leather goods manufacturing concern that employs sixty people.

After having served as apprentices with the Decatur Iron and Steel Company, which during the war built tugs and landing craft, Melvin Ozier and Bob Wilson established a metal-working business called the Willo Products Company. Financing the business presented no serious problem; Decatur is now quick to back its young men

who have the "know-how" for making things. These young men make, among other things, tanks in which farmers store tractor fuel.

Southeastern Metals, of which R. H. Harris is president, works with aluminum. This corporation now employs forty young men and women; it was organized by three young Decatur men. The firm makes kits for the Boy Scouts of America and various kinds of household utensils. "We started our business by getting a contract to make Army canteens," explained President Harris. "But after the war was over, we had no difficulty converting to civilian products. Now we get more orders than we can accept."

These examples are typical of Decatur's seventy-five industrial and processing establishments, which now employ 4143 men and women, black and white, and last year paid local workers \$6,500,000 in wages. Most of the plants are small, home-owned and home-operated. Like the farming program with which many of them are related, they are "diversified" in materials, products and the types of employment they provide. Most important of all, they solved the employment problem of Decatur and Morgan County.

When the program was launched, the population of Decatur was 13,593. By 1940, it had increased to 16,604. It now has an estimated population of 20,500. During the fifteen-year period, Morgan County, of which Decatur is the county seat, has gained 3000 in

population, the city 7000. Thus the city has provided jobs for "surplus" farm workers in a county that ranks among Alabama's first five in the number of tractor-operated farms.

"Never have we lost sight of the main objective — providing markets for the products of diversified agriculture," said Maynard Layman, in summarizing Decatur's efforts to build a well-balanced economy. "We have talked about it constantly, worked hard, and accepted all the help we could get. But very early in the game we learned that we had to accept responsibility for building our own community; others would not do it. For example, when we tried to provide a plant for marketing and manufacturing grade milk, we approached Borden, Pet, Carnation and all other

big corporations in the business." All asked how many cows we had. When we told them, they laughed. So we were compelled to do the job ourselves. We found that this same principle applied to every new project undertaken."

The "Decatur Plan," in which farmers grow the raw materials for factories, can be styled to fit the commodities produced in any community. It is the only way through which the typical county seat in the Cotton Belt can create new payrolls. If universally adopted, it would raise the earning power of both rural and urban groups to something like a "parity" with incomes in other sections of the nation. Best of all, it would stop the trek of migratory labor from all over the Cotton South.

## PHRASE ORIGINS—15

**SIXES AND SEVENS:** In Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*, Captain Corcoran bewails the upheaval on his ship with the query, "Say, why is everything/ Either at sixes or at sevens?" He learned the answer before the end of the play, but it is harder to learn the exact origin of this phrase, which once meant to hazard everything, and has since come to mean disorder and confusion. One guess was that the present meaning derives from the fact that the two numbers added together make the unlucky thirteen. Another investigator has connected the phrase with a passage in the Book of Job: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Another, more likely, conjecture is that the phrase comes from an early gambling expression. In dicing with a single die, five (or cinque) and six (or sice) were the highest throws. "To set on cinque and sice," or to hazard everything on the highest throws, became a popular gambling expression. This was later corrupted into "to set on six and seven," from which the modern expression derives.

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

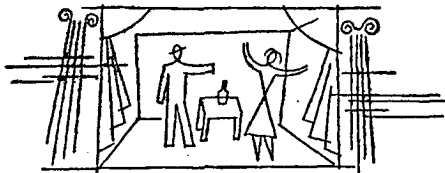


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# THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

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## RÉCIPES FOR DRAMATIC FAILURE

MY FRIEND, John Mason Brown, writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature* on the musicalized *Street Scene*, observes:

When Maurrant is arrested after the murder of his wife it becomes impossible not to smile as he turns to his daughter to intone "What did I do it for?" and a great many words of the same kind. In short, though the evening has its distinguished features, it is bound to seem at war with itself. It labors brilliantly to produce the realism of Mr. Rice's text, and huffs and puffs no less industriously to shatter it. In spite of its obvious merits, what this new *Street Scene* suffers from is not the heat of Mr. Rice's story but the frequent humidity of Mr. Weill's attempt to turn a realistic drama into an opera.

While I do not share my good colleague's critical opinion, I can at least well understand any such personal reaction, though it seems to me that Maurrant's "What did I do it for?" upon the murder of his wife is not so very different from Verdi's Othello's, or that other such allegedly jarring words are much more oper-

atically incompatible than, for example, such as Mozart's Don Giovanni's "Tell the old buffoon that I expect him to dinner tomorrow evening"; and though I further suspect that were *Street Scene* laid in Milan and sung in Italian what is objected to would waywardly be found sufficiently plausible.

Criticism otherwise proceeds, I think, simply from the surprise and shock of seeing and hearing for the first time a realistic American theme treated in an operatic manner, and the surprise and even shock are not materially different from those experienced by criticism upon its first contemplation of, say, Picasso's modernism or the first audition of Richard Strauss' so-called tonal anarchy. Nor, I further venture, is *Street Scene* quite wholly the realistic thing it is argued to be. While it surely may not be described on the whole as romantic, its love story, which is its operatic treatment's chief theme, fully subscribes to Denis de Rougemont's acute definition, in *L'Amour et l'Occident*, of the essential element of

romance as "unhappy mutual love."

The point in relation to John Patrick's *The Story of Mary Surratt*, which collapsed after only nine performances, is that any such historical-biographical play, like any such operatic *Street Scene*, plainly calls in many cases not merely for a Coleridge suspension of judgment but for a double-Coleridge dose of it. In the instance of the usual play, one is asked simply to remit judgment that what one is engaging is plainly fiction and to imagine that it is rather actuality transferred to the stage. But in the instance of a play like this, it is demanded that one not only suspend judgment that what one is engaging is not fiction, but, in addition, that the actors are not recognizable actor personalities playing the characters but that they are factually the historical personages.

It is the consequent difficulty that causes most of these modern biographical-historical characters to impress one as characters on a motion picture screen: two-dimensional ghosts remote from life and actuality, and the documentary plays in which they figure as bogus.

It is therefore mainly when the plays are comedies and make some concession to disbelief that they are relatively acceptable. A Napoleon in a *St. Helena* taxes the credulity. A Napoleon in a *Madame Sans-Gêne* or *The Man of Destiny* seems much the more real and reasonable. And will no one kindly seek to controvert any such opinion by naming the various

Lincoln plays which appear exceptionally to have been swallowable by local audiences. Lincoln, it would seem, would be swallowable to American audiences even were he to be played by Bobby Clark. The author of *The Story of Mary Surratt*, it seems, made a big mistake in keeping him off-stage.

## II

It is a perversity of audiences and many critics, of whom often I am one, that they are able much more readily to accept dramatic fiction for the time being as fact than fact as fact. Fact frequently has a way of seeming spurious when placed upon a stage, perhaps because it does not really after all belong there in the first place. It gives the imagination no free pasture; it too frequently has the air of having been transcribed by a studious bookkeeper; it seems as misplaced as fiction would be in a court circular.

Poetry may palliate it, but prose, save it be satirical or humorous, only paradoxically emphasizes its artificiality. It is, in brief, theatrically unbelievable, a bastard born of truth and greasepaint.

Mr. Patrick's play was further unsatisfactory on other counts. Since, first, an audience was antecedently aware of the historical record, it lacked all suspense and, after its first act, had to rely for interest on ingenuity of dramaturgy, which here was missing. Secondly, since the four hundred or so witnesses who testified

at the Surratt trial necessarily had to be drastically curtailed for stage purposes — they were reduced to a mere half dozen — and since the trial thus lasted little more than half an hour, the ultimate condemnation of the protagonist seemed to be absurdly abrupt and was dramatically unconvincing. Thirdly, since Mary Surratt was a negligible person and since the play could not honestly present her otherwise, her fate lacked weight and size, as the fall of insignificance is scarcely fraught with the elements of profound tragedy.

Fourthly, the play, for all its historical verity, unavoidably edged into the pattern of the endless mimeographed melodramas of the yesterdays with their innocent heroines persecuted by the law, brought into cruel courtrooms, and defended by their upstanding and loyal lovers. Fifthly, the final scene in the prison cell adhered to an even more familiar pattern in the doomed woman about to meet her death and visited successively by her tearful young daughter, her heartbroken lover given to consoling oratory, and the usual benign priest. (Since the actor playing the latter in this case bore an alarming resemblance to the late Irvin Cobb, the pathos of the scene suffered an added blow.) And, sixthly, the spectacle of a heroine confronted and battered throughout the evening by enough villains to have stocked the complete series of Sullivan, Consideine and Woods melodramas tended to be disturbingly humorous.

## III

Another type of play that often finds the cards stacked against it is the comedy built around a quarreling married couple. A first-rate playwright may, of course, succeed in making such an exhibit not only endurable but amusing. But one less than first-rate finds that not only does he not amuse his audience but grossly irritates it, and for a reason not too difficult to deduce.

Repetitions are an ailment from which a play has serious trouble in recovering, and the comedies in point are founded largely on repetitions. A quarreling couple may be tolerable when first they indulge in recriminations, but as the recriminations proceed an audience finds itself in exactly the same position as it would were it to observe and suffer such quarrels in its social life. It is depressed by them, and it resents being made a visual and auditory party to them. And it is thus that any number of later plays like *Round Trip*, *Make Yourself at Home*, *You Touched Me*, *The Rich*, *Full Life*, *I Like It Here*, *Obsession*, *Loco*, *Made in Heaven*, *Little A*, and *It Takes Two* have failed to woo audiences.

The danger of repetitions in even the best of drama is to be appreciated from the case of *The Iceman Cometh*. Though no living playwright is more expert in dramaturgy than O'Neill and though he deliberately has employed various repetitions of speech and act in order to increase its impact, even

the more intelligent auditor gags at them, and as a consequence the play has not found the sizable audiences that he expected. It is for the same reason that the German plays, chiefly comedies, which years ago in adaptation were so popular in this country, gradually lost favor and practically disappeared from the local stage. The popular German playwriting device of scene repetitions gradually palled upon American audiences and they would have no more of them.

## IV

Still another kind of play that often experiences rough going is, as already hinted, the courtroom or jury-room species. There was a time in the past when plays with courtroom scenes were dear to the fancy of the theatre-going public and when almost without exception they made money. Their names, beginning with the old, cheap melodramas and extending to countless such later exhibits as *Madame X*, *et al.*, and such still later as *The Trial of Mary Dugan* and the like, would fill pages. But presently the novelty wore off and today it takes an exceptional play with such a scene or one laid in a jury-room to turn a profit at the box-office. The names of those that have failed to make theatre money would in turn fill considerable space. For example, to specify only a few, *Libell*, *Christopher Blake*, the aforesaid *The Story of Mary Surratt*, *Pick-up Girl*, *Young Madame Conti*, *Censored*, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, *Geneva*, *Judgment Day*,

*Jayhawker*, *Good Men and True*, *The Case of Clyde Griffiths*, *Scarlet Pages*, *The Bellamy Trial*, etc.

If, furthermore, a courtroom play winds up with the conviction of the hero or heroine and shows a final scene in a prison cell, you may just as well in nine cases out of ten call up the storehouse and tell them to send around the horses. There was also a time when these cell scenes were acceptable, but that time is now apparently long past. Raise your last curtain on a cell, as I have implied in the earlier remarks on *The Story of Mary Surratt*, and the backers may promptly kiss their money good-bye.

What is more, they may practise up on a similar osculation when they nowadays invest in mystery plays. Of such plays, sixty-six out of seventy-three have failed in New York in the last baker's dozen years. Add at least twelve more failures in the pre-Broadway road tryouts and you have a grand total of seventy-eight collapses out of eighty-five attempts.

One of the reasons for the staggering mortality rate is undoubtedly the tremendous later-day increase in the reading of mystery stories which, while it apparently has not in the least surfeited the public, has made it considerably more choosy in its taste. To succeed today, a mystery play accordingly has to be much more ingenious than it needed to be in the past, much more exciting, and much more inventive and logical in its solution. This is not to say that some of the big successes in bygone years

were not all of these, at least in their time. The point is rather that the great majority of the plays produced in more recent years have not only lacked the kick of such plays but that of even the relatively poorer specimens, and as a consequence have driven the theatregoing public back

to the stuff, good or bad but in either case economical, between pocket book covers. A poor mystery at twenty-five cents is thus found to be paradoxically more acceptable than an equally poor one at \$4.80, which, all things today considered, may not be so very paradoxical after all.

## BROWN, THE GARDENER

BY ETHEL BARNETT DEVITO

The second of the month (when Brown is paid)  
Moran looks for his visit to the store:  
A stooped old man whose shuffling way is made  
Directly to the seed rack near the door.

And if his gentle handling and bent frame  
Do not proclaim his work to every one,  
There is his face, the color of his name  
And of the earth, as though he were her son.

Moran always waits and curbs his own delight  
At seeing Brown, to let him, by himself  
Make his discoveries till the time is right  
To bring the newest plant food from his shelf.

And then they talk till it is time to close:  
Arguing what is best to border walks,  
Gravely discussing symptoms of a rose  
Or how to fatten spindling lupine stalks.

And watching Brown go off with sacks of stuff  
Moran reflects how fine, these thoughtless days,  
To know one man profound or wise enough  
To give important things an important place.

## MR. DURANT

A STORY

BY DOROTHY PARKER

NOT for some ten days had Mr. Durant known any such ease of mind. He gave himself up to it, wrapped himself, warm and soft, in his freshly-gained calm, as in the voluptuous folds of a new and expensive cloak. God, for Whom Mr. Durant entertained a good-humored tolerance, was in His heaven, and all was again well with Mr. Durant's world.

Curious how this renewed peace sharpened his enjoyment of the accustomed things about him. He looked back at the rubber works, which he had just left for the day, and nodded approvingly at the solid red pile, at the six neat stories rising impressively into the darkness. You would go far, he thought, before you would find a more up-and-coming outfit, and there welled in him a pleasing, proprietary sense of being a part of it.

He gazed amiably down Centre Street, noting how restfully the lights glowed. Even the wet, dented pavement, spotted with thick puddles, fed

his pleasure by reflecting the discreet radiance above it. And to complete his comfort, the car for which he was waiting, admirably on time, swung into view far down the track. He thought, with a sort of jovial tenderness, of what it would bear him home to; of his dinner — it was fish-chowder night — of his children, of his wife, in the order named. Then he turned his kindly attention to the girl who stood near him, obviously awaiting the Centre Street car, too. He was delighted to feel a sharp interest in her. He regarded it as being distinctly creditable to himself that he could take a healthy notice of such matters once more. Twenty years younger — that's what he felt.

Rather shabby, she was, in her rough coat with its shagginess rubbed off here and there, and the pitiful pretentiousness of her inadequate shoes. But there was a something in the way her cheaply smart turban was jammed over her eyes, in the way her thin young figure moved under

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**DOROTHY PARKER** is the well-known short-story writer, poet and wit. In recent years she has devoted herself to scenario writing in Hollywood. Among the best-known collections of her work are *Here Lies* and *Not So Deep As a Well*. The present story, first published in the September 1924 issue of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, is here reprinted by arrangement with the Viking Press, New York; it is included in the one-volume edition of Mrs. Parker's work, *The Portable Dorothy Parker*, which was published in 1944.

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the loose coat. Mr. Durant pointed his tongue, and moved it delicately along his cool, smooth upper lip.

The car approached, clanged to a stop before them. Mr. Durant stepped gallantly aside to let the girl get in first. He did not help her to enter, but the solicitous way in which he superintended the process gave all the effect of his having actually assisted her.

Her tight little skirt slipped up over her thin, pretty legs almost to their knees, as she took the high step. There was a run in one of her flimsy silk stockings. She was doubtless unconscious of it; it was well back toward the seam, extending, probably from her garter, halfway down the calf. Mr. Durant had an odd desire to catch his thumbnail in the present end of the run, and to draw it on down until the slim line of the dropped stitches reached to the top of her low shoe. An indulgent smile at his whimsy played about his mouth, broadening to a grin of affable evening greeting for the conductor, as he entered the car and paid his fare.

The girl sat down somewhere far up at the front. Mr. Durant found a desirable seat toward the rear, and craned his neck to see her. He could catch a glimpse of a fold of her turban and a bit of her frankly rouged cheek, but only at a cost of holding his head in a strained, and presently painful, position. So, warmed by the assurance that there would always be others, he let her go, and settled himself restfully. He had a ride of twenty

minutes or so before him. He allowed his head to fall gently back, let his eyelids droop, and gave himself to his thoughts. Now that the thing was comfortably over and done with, he could think of it easily, almost laughingly. Last week, now, and even part of the week before, he had had to try with all his strength to force it back every time it wrenched itself into his mind. It had positively affected his sleep. Even though he was shielded by his newly-acquired amused attitude, Mr. Durant felt indignation flood within him when he recalled those restless nights.

## II

He had met Rose for the first time about three months before. She had been sent up to his office to take some letters for him. Mr. Durant was assistant manager of the rubber company's credit department; his wife was wont to refer to him as one of the officers of the company, and, though she often spoke thus of him to people in his presence, he never troubled to go more fully into detail about his position. He rated a room, a desk, and a telephone to himself, but not a stenographer. When he wanted to give dictation or to have some letters typed, he telephoned around to the various other offices until he found a girl who was not busy with her own work. That was how Rose had come to him.

She was not a pretty girl. Distinctly, no. There was a rather sweet fragility about her, and an almost



desperate timidity that Mr. Durant had once found engaging, but that he now thought of with a prickling irritation. She was twenty, and the glamor of youth was around her. When she bent over her work, her back showing white through her sleazy blouse, her deliciously clean hair coiled smoothly on her thin neck, her straight, childish legs crossed at the knee to support her pad, she had an undeniable appeal.

But not pretty—no. Her hair wasn't the kind that went up well, her eyelashes and lips were too pale, she hadn't much knack about choosing and wearing her cheap clothes. Mr. Durant, in reviewing the thing, felt a surprise that she should ever have attracted him. But it was a tolerant surprise, not an impatient one. Already he looked back on himself as being just a big boy in the whole affair.

It did not occur to him to feel even a flicker of astonishment that Rose should have responded so eagerly to him, an immovably married man of forty-nine. He never thought of himself in that way. He used to tell Rose, laughingly, that he was old enough to be her father, but neither of them ever really believed it. He regarded her affection for him as the most natural thing in the world—there she was, coming from a much smaller town, never the sort of girl to have had admirers; naturally, she was dazzled at the attentions of a man who, as Mr. Durant fondly put it, was approaching the prime of life. He

had been charmed with the idea of there having been no other men in her life; but lately, far from feeling flattered at being the first and only one, he had come to regard it as taking a sly advantage of him, to put him in that position.

It had all been surprisingly easy. Mr. Durant knew it would be almost from the first time he saw her. That did not lessen its interest in his eyes. Obstacles permanently discouraged him, rather than led him on. Elimination of bother was the main thing.

Rose was not a coquettish girl. She had that curious directness that some very timid people possess. There were her scruples, of course, but Mr. Durant readily reasoned them away. Not that he was a master of technique, either. He had had some experiences, probably a third as many as he habitually thought of himself as having been through, but none that taught him much of the delicate shadings of wooing. But then, Rose's simplicity asked exceedingly little.

She was never one to demand much of him, anyway. She never thought of stirring up any trouble between him and his wife, never beseeched him to leave his family and go away with her, even for a day. Mr. Durant valued her for that. It did away with a lot of probable fussing.

It was amazing how free they were, how little lying there was to do. They stayed in the office after hours—Mr. Durant found many letters that must be dictated. No one thought anything of that. Rose was busy most

of the day, and it was only considerate that Mr. Durant should not break in on her employer's time, only natural that he should want so good a stenographer as she was to attend to his correspondence.

Rose's one relative, a married sister, lived in another town. The girl roomed with an acquaintance named Ruby, also employed at the rubber works, and Ruby, who seemed much taken up with her own affairs of the emotions, never appeared to think it strange if Rose was late to dinner, or missed the meal entirely. Mr. Durant readily explained to his wife that he was detained by a rush of business. It only increased his importance, to her, and spurred her on to devising especially pleasing dishes, and solicitously keeping them hot for his return. Sometimes, important in their guilt, they put out the light in the little office and locked the door, to trick the other employees into thinking that they had long ago gone home. But no one ever so much as rattled the door-knob seeking admission.

It was all so simple that Mr. Durant never thought of it as anything outside the usual order of things. His interest in Rose did not blunt his appreciation of chance pretty ankles or provocative glances. It was an entanglement of the most restful, comfortable nature. It even held a sort of homelike quality, for him.

And then everything had to go and get spoiled. "Wouldn't you know?" Mr. Durant asked himself, with a profound bitterness.

III

Ten days ago, Rose had come weeping to his office. She had the sense to wait till after hours, for a wonder, but anybody might have walked in and seen her blubbering there; Mr. Durant felt it to be due only to the efficient management of his personal God that no one had. She wept, as he sweepingly put it, all over the place. She did not cry well. The color left her cheeks and collected damply in her nose, and rims of vivid pink grew around her pale eyelashes. Even her hair became affected; it came away from the pins, and stray ends of it wandered limply over her neck. Mr. Durant hated to look at her, could not bring himself to touch her.

All his energies were expended in urging her for God's sake to keep quiet; he did not ask her what was the matter. But it came out, between bursts of unpleasant-sounding sobs. She was "in trouble." Neither then nor in the succeeding days did she and Mr. Durant ever use any less delicate phrase to describe her condition. Even in their thoughts, they referred to it that way.

She had suspected it, she said, for some time, but she hadn't wanted to bother him about it until she was absolutely sure. "Didn't want to bother me!" thought Mr. Durant, with increased choler.

Naturally, he was furious. Innocence is a desirable thing, a dainty thing, an appealing thing, in its place; but carried too far, it is merely

ridiculous. Mr. Durant wished to God that he had never seen Rose. He explained this desire to her.

But that was no way to get things done. As he had often jovially remarked to his friends, he knew "a thing or two." Cases like this could be what people of the world called "fixed up" — New York society women, he understood, thought virtually nothing of it. This one must be, too, that was all. He got Rose to go home, lavishly telling her not to worry, he would see that everything was all right. The main thing was to get her out of sight, with that nose and those eyes.

But knowing a thing or two and putting the knowledge into practice turned out to be vastly different things. Mr. Durant did not know whom to seek for information. He pictured himself inquiring of his intimates if they could tell him of "someone that this girl he had heard about could go to." He could hear his voice uttering the words, could hear the nervous laugh that would accompany them, the terrible flatness of them as they left his lips. To confide in one person would be confiding in at least one too many. It was a progressing town, but still small enough for gossip to travel with incredible rapidity. Not that he thought for a moment that his wife would believe any such thing, if it reached her; but where would be the sense in bothering her with that kind of dirt?

Mr. Durant grew pale and jumpy over the thing as the days went by.

His wife worried herself into one of her sick spells over his petulant refusals of second helpings. There daily rose in him an increasing anger that he should be drawn into conniving to find a way to break the law of his country — probably the law of every country in the world. Certainly of every decent, Christian place.

It was Ruby, finally, who got them out of it. When Rose confessed to him that she had broken down and told Ruby, his rage leaped higher than any words. Ruby was secretary to the vice-president of the rubber company. It would be pretty, wouldn't it, if she let it out? He had lain wide-eyed beside his wife all that night through. He shuddered at the thought of chance meetings with Ruby in the hall.

But Ruby had made it delightfully simple, when they did meet. There were no reproachful looks, no cold turnings away of the head. She had given him her usual smiling "good-morning," and added a little upward glance, mischievous, understanding, with just the least hint of admiration in it. There was a sense of intimacy, of a shared secret binding them cozily together. A fine girl, that Ruby!

Ruby had managed it all without any fuss. Mr. Durant was not directly concerned in the planning. He heard of it only through Rose, on the infrequent occasions when he had had to see her. Ruby knew, through some vague friend of hers, of "a woman." It would be twenty-five dollars. Mr. Durant had gallantly insisted upon

giving Rose the money. She had got sniffy again about taking it, but he had finally prevailed. Not that he couldn't have used the twenty-five very nicely himself, just then, with Junior's teeth, and all!

## IV

Well, it was all over now. The invaluable Ruby had gone with Rose to "the woman," had that very afternoon taken her to the station and put her on a train for her sister's. She had even thought of writing the sister beforehand that Rose had had influenza and must have a rest.

Mr. Durant had soothingly urged Rose to look on it as just a little vacation. He promised, moreover, to put in a good word for her whenever she wanted her job back. But Rose had gone pink about the nose again at the thought. She had sobbed her rasping sobs, then had raised her face from her stringy handkerchief and said, with an entirely foreign firmness, that she never wanted to see the rubber works or Ruby or Mr. Durant again. He had laughed indulgently, had made himself pat her thin back. In his relief at the outcome of things, he could be generous to her pettishness.

He chuckled inaudibly, as he reviewed that last scene. "I suppose she thought she'd make me sore, saying she was never coming back," he told himself. "I suppose I was suppose to get down on my knees and coax her."

It was fine to dwell on the surety that it was all done with. Mr. Durant

had somewhere picked up a phrase that seemed ideally suited to the occasion. It was to him an admirably dashing expression. There was something English about it; it was the sort of thing you would expect to hear used by men who wore spats without self-consciousness. He employed it now, with satisfaction.

"Well, that's that," he said to himself. He was not sure that he didn't say it aloud.

The car slowed, and the girl in the rough coat came down toward the door. She was jolted against Mr. Durant — he would have sworn she did it purposely — uttered a word of laughing apology, gave him what he interpreted as an inviting glance. He half rose to follow her, then sank back again. After all, it was a wet night, and his corner was five blocks farther on. Again there came over him the cozy assurance that there would always be others.

In high humor, he left the car at his street, and walked in the direction of his house. It was a mean night, but the insinuating cold and the thin rain only made more graphic his picture of the warm, bright house, the great dish of steaming fish chowder, the well-behaved children and wife that awaited him. He walked rather slowly to make them seem all the better for the wait, humming a little on his way down the neat sidewalk, past the solid, respectably shabby houses.

Two girls ran past him, holding their hands over their heads to protect their hats from the wet. He enjoyed

the click of their heels on the pavement, their little bursts of breathless laughter, the arms upraised in a position that brought out all the clean lines of their young bodies. He knew who they were — they lived three doors down from him, in the house with the lamppost in front of it. He had often lingeringly noticed their fresh prettiness. He hurried, so that he might see them run up the steps, their narrow skirts sliding up over their legs. His mind went back to the girl with the run in her stocking, and amusing thoughts filled him as he entered his own gate.

His children rushed clamorously to meet him as he unlocked the door. There was something unusually exciting going on, for Junior and Charlotte were usually too careful-mannered to cause people discomfort by rushing and clamoring. They were nice, sensible children, good at their lessons, and punctilious about brushing their teeth, speaking the truth, and avoiding playmates who used bad words. Junior would be the very picture of his father, when they got the bands off his teeth, and little Charlotte strongly resembled her mother. Friends often commented on what a nice arrangement it was.

Mr. Durant smiled good-naturedly through their racket, carefully hanging up his coat and hat. There was even pleasure for him in the arrangement of his apparel on the cool, shiny knob of the hatrack. Everything was pleasant, tonight. Even the children's noise couldn't irritate him.

Eventually he discovered the cause of the commotion. It was a little stray dog that had come to the back door. They were out in the kitchen helping Freda, and Charlotte thought she heard something scratching, and Freda said nonsense, but Charlotte went to the door, anyway, and there was this little dog, trying to get in out of the wet. Mother helped them give it a bath, and Freda fed it, and now it was in the living-room. Oh, Father, couldn't they keep it, please, couldn't they, couldn't they, please? It didn't have any collar on — it didn't belong to anybody. Mother said all right, if he said so, and Freda liked it all right.

Mr. Durant still smiled his gentle smile. "We'll see," he said, benignly.

The children looked disappointed, but not despondent. They would have liked more enthusiasm, but "we'll see," they knew by experience, meant a leaning in the right direction.

Mr. Durant proceeded to the living-room, to inspect the visitor. It was not a beauty. All too obviously it was the living souvenir of a mother who had never been able to say no. It was a rather stocky little beast with shaggy white hair and occasional, rakishly-placed patches of black. There was a suggestion of Scottish terrier about it, but that was almost blotted out by hosts of reminiscences of other breeds. It looked, on the whole, like a composite photograph of Popular Dogs. But you could tell at a glance

that it had a way with it. Sceptres have been tossed aside for that.

It lay, now, by the fire, waving its tragically long tail wistfully, its eyes pleading with Mr. Durant to give it a fair trial. The children had told it to lie down there, and so it did not move. That was something it could do toward repaying them.

Mr. Durant warmed to it. He did not dislike dogs, and he somewhat fancied the picture of himself as just a great, soft-hearted fellow, who lavishly extended shelter to friendless animals. He bent, and held out a hand to it.

"Well, sir," he said, genially. He always addressed dogs as "sir." "Come here, good fellow."

The dog ran to him, wriggling ecstatically. It covered his cold hand with joyous, though respectful kisses, then laid its warm, heavy head on his palm. "You are beyond a doubt the greatest man in America," it told him with its eyes.

Mr. Durant enjoyed appreciation and gratitude. He patted the dog graciously.

"Well, sir, how'd you like to board with us a while?" he said. "I guess you can plan to settle down." Charlotte squeezed Junior's arm wildly. Neither of them, though, thought it best to crowd their good fortune by making any immediate comment on it.

Mrs. Durant entered from the kitchen, flushed with her final attentions to the chowder. There was a worried line between her eyes, just

above the gold arch of her pince-nez. Part of the worry was due to the dinner, and part to the disturbing entrance of the little dog into the family life. Anything not previously included in her day's schedule threw Mrs. Durant into a state resembling that of one convalescing from shell-shock. Her hands jerked nervously, beginning vague gestures that they never finished.

Relief smoothed her drawn face when she saw her husband patting the dog. The children, always at ease with her, shrieked that Father said it might stay.

"There, now — didn't I tell you what a dear, good father you had?" she said in the aggressively triumphant tone parents employ when they have happened to guess right. "That's fine, Father. With that big yard and all, I think we'll make out all right. She really seems to be good —"

## VI

Mr. Durant's hand stopped sharply in its patting motion, as if the dog's neck had suddenly become red-hot to his touch. He rose, and looked at his wife as at a stranger who has suddenly begun to act queerly.

"She?" he said. He had always been notable for getting much into a single word.

Mrs. Durant's hands were twitching. "Well —" she began hurriedly, as if about to plunge into a recital of extenuating circumstances. "Well — yes," she concluded, lamely.

The children and the dog looked

nervously at Mr. Durant, sensing something wrong. Charlotte whimpered wordlessly.

"Quiet!" said her father, turning suddenly upon her. "I said it could stay, didn't I? Did you ever know Father to break a promise?"

Charlotte politely murmured, "No, Father," but conviction was not hers. She was a philosophical child, though, and she decided to leave the whole issue to God, occasionally jogging Him up a bit with prayer.

Mr. Durant frowned meaningfully at his wife, and jerked his head backward. This indicated that he wished to have a few words with her, for adults only, in the privacy of the little room across the hall, known as "Father's den."

He had directed the decoration of his den, had seen that it had been made a regular he-man's room. Red paper covered its walls, up to the wooden rack on which were displayed ornamental steins, of domestic manufacture. Empty pipe-racks — Mr. Durant smoked cigars — decorated with crafty faces in china with tufts of real gray hair glued on to them, were nailed against the red paper at frequent intervals. On one wall was an indifferent reproduction of Gibson's pen-and-ink drawing, "The Eternal Question," and on another, a water-colored photograph of "September Morn," the tints running a bit beyond the edges of the figure as if the artist's emotions had rendered his hand unsteady. Over the table was carefully flung a tanned and

fringed hide with the profile of an unknown Indian maiden painted on it, and the rocking-chair held a leather pillow bearing the picture, done by pyrography, of a girl in a fencing costume which admirably set off her early Casino Theatre figure.

Mr. Durant's books were lined up behind the glass of the book-case. They were all tall, thick books, brightly bound, and they justified his pride in their splendid showing. They were mostly accounts of favorites of the French court, with a few volumes on the private life of the ex-Kaiser, and the intrigues of the Russian throne-room. Mrs. Durant, who never had time to get around to reading, regarded them with awe, and thought of her husband as one of the country's leading bibliophiles. There were books, too, in the living-room, but those she had inherited or been given. She had arranged a few, with decorative carelessness, on the living-room table; they looked as if they had been placed there by the Gideons.

Mr. Durant thought of himself as an indefatigable collector and an insatiable reader. But he was always disappointed in his books, after he had sent for them. They were never as good as the advertisements had led him to believe.

Into his den Mr. Durant preceded his wife, and faced her, still frowning. His calm was not shattered, but it was punctured. Something annoying always had to go and come up. Wouldn't you know?



"Now you know perfectly well, Fan, we can't have that dog around," he told her. He used the low voice reserved for underwear and bathroom articles and kindred risqué topics. There was the patient kindness in his tones that one has for a backward child, but a Gibraltar-like firmness was behind it. "You must be crazy to even think we could for a minute. Why, I wouldn't give a she-dog house-room, not for any amount of money. It's disgusting, that's what it is."

"Well, but, Father —" began Mrs. Durant, her hands again going off into their convulsions.

"Disgusting," he repeated. "You have a female around, and you know what happens. All the males in the neighborhood will be running after her. First thing you know, she'd be having puppies — and the way they look after they've had them, and all! That would be nice for the children to see, wouldn't it? I should think you'd

think of the children, Fan. No, sir, there'll be nothing like that around here, not while I know it. Disgusting!"

"But the children," she whined. "They'll be just simply —"

"Now you just leave all that to me," he reassured her. "I told them the dog could stay, and I've never broken a promise yet, have I? Here's what I'll do — I'll wait till they're asleep, and then I'll just take this dog and put it out. Then, in the morning, you can tell them it ran away during the night. See?"

She nodded, vaguely. Her husband patted her shoulder, in its crêpe-smelling black silk. His peace with the world was again intact, restored by this simple solution of the little difficulty. Again his mind wrapped itself comfortably up in the knowledge that everything was all fixed, all ready for a nice, fresh start. His arm was still about his wife's shoulder as they went on in to dinner.

## LOST PILGRIMAGE

BY LILLIAN EVERTS

How crowded with a music is the word  
that whispers of a meaning to be heard,  
yet disappears as shadow of a bird  
and hides behind the tomb of the deferred  
waiting till the moment is too late  
to lead it through the orchestrated gate . . .

How crowded with a music is the word  
that pleads the need of meaning to be heard,  
yet disappears as shadow of a bird  
silenced in a silencing interred.

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# The conquest of CANCER is progressing.

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Last year medical science  saved  
the lives of thousands of cancer patients,  
and many more might have been saved  
 if cancer had been discovered  
early.

Chances of cure are best when cancer is  
treated in the early stages. To detect  
early cases, there are 3 things  every  
one should know!



## What are the "Danger Signals" that may mean Cancer?

They are: 1. Any unusual lump or thickening, especially in the breast. 2. Any irregular or unexplained bleeding. 3. A sore that does not heal, particularly about the mouth, tongue, or lips. 4. Any changes in the color or size of a mole or wart. 5. Loss of appetite or continued unexplained indigestion. 6. Any persistent changes in elimination.



## What should you do when warnings appear?

*Get medical advice at once! The "danger signals" show that something is wrong, but they are not sure signs of cancer. At one leading clinic nearly 9 out of every 10 women who came for examination because they recognized the warnings did not have the disease!*



## Why are annual physical checkups important?

Cancer often starts without any warning signals that the patient can detect. Only examination by a skilled physician may discover these "silent" cancers in their early stages. That is why annual medical examinations are so important, especially for older people.

## There is progress in cancer research, too!

Today, more and more people are living to older ages when cancer is most prevalent. Cancer still ranks second among the causes of death, but medical science is continually increasing its knowledge of the disease, and working to develop new and better techniques for its control.

While specialists say that the best means known for treating cancer is complete removal by surgery, or complete destruction by X-rays or radium rays, experiments with other methods are constantly going forward. Atomic research has provided valuable new materials for laboratory study of cancer cells. Clinical research and intensive studies in chemistry, biology, and physics also give real hope that the secrets of cancer will be discovered.

To help protect yourself from cancer, and to learn more about this disease, send for Metropolitan's free booklet, 67-L, "There Is Something YOU Can Do About Cancer."

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**TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE—KEEP IT!**

# HARLEM'S ARISTOCRACY

BY WILL CHASAN

SUGAR HILL, a pleasant penthouse-dotted residential area on a bluff in upper Manhattan, overlooking Harlem's frayed and congested slums, is a center of the Negro élite. "Everybody who is Anybody in Harlem lives on Sugar Hill now or wants to move in as soon as Somebody moves out," *Ebony*, a Negro magazine patterned after *Life*, observed not long ago. The Hill's twenty-odd tree-lined blocks, strung out between New York's City College and the Polo Grounds, contain perhaps the country's largest concentration of what Negroes sometimes call the "talented tenth" — their college-bred professionals, race leaders, business successes, and celebrities in the arts. Hill residents are prominent in nearly every phase of Negro life in New York; some have national reputations in fields as varied as sociology and jazz. They include William E. B. Du Bois, the well-known Negro writer; ballad singer Josh White; poet Langston Hughes; actor Canada Lee; orchestra leader and composer Duke Ellington; muralist Aaron Douglas; and two of the most influential Negro

leaders in the United States — Walter White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and Lester B. Granger, executive secretary of the National Urban League. Most of the Hill's "big names" — there are also many obscure ones — live in around a half dozen of its better buildings. The tenant rosters of two of these, 409 and 555 Edgecombe Avenue, are so cluttered with names prominent in the Negro community that they suggest pages of a Negro Who's Who. Both 409 and 555 are so well known in Harlem, and among Negroes as far distant as Chicago, that they are referred to merely by their numbers. When a Harlemitte tells you that he lives in 409, he generally expects you to understand that he is a member of the élite.

Sugar Hill owes its distinction to the exclusion of Negroes from most of New York's better residential areas. Realtors claim that Negroes, even if they are doctors or judges, cheapen the realty values of any neighborhood into which they move. A number of Negroes, among them Paul Robeson,

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WILL CHASAN has contributed profiles of Philip Murray and John L. Lewis to recent issues of THE AMERICAN MERCURY. He is a former editor of Common Sense.

Cab Calloway, and Richard Wright, have moved to Riverdale, Greenwich Village, and other white neighborhoods without causing realty values to topple, but the realtors remain unconvinced. Nor are they affected, apparently, by the periodic protests of New York liberals against jim-crow practices in the South. Sugar Hill, in effect an upper-class subdivision of the Harlem ghetto, is one of the few sections of the city where Negroes can lease modern apartments and enjoy such amenities as canopy-bedecked entrances, elevator service, uniformed doormen, and rooms with a view.

Even on Sugar Hill, however, they don't escape completely from jim-crow discriminations. White owners of some of the Hill's buildings make little effort to keep them in good repair — the signs of neglect are obvious in shabby exteriors and lobbies — and Hill tenants often complain bitterly that the owners allow the appearance of their buildings to deteriorate and then blame it on the "natural messiness" of Negroes. The notion that Negroes are naturally messy would be difficult to uphold in Hill homes, many of which are not only fastidiously kept but furnished with elaborate care.

## II

Partly because of the eminence of many of its residents, Sugar Hill has a gaudy reputation as the home of fashionable Negroes with "sugar," whence its name, but it is not a particularly affluent community. It has a

thin economic upper crust whose members — a handful of entertainers, judges, business men, and Negro agency executives, and perhaps a stray physician or lawyer — earn \$10,000 or more a year. A few racketeers who live on the Hill are conspicuously wealthy, but they belong to Harlem's flashy demi-monde and are rarely welcomed in Hill circles. In fact, A. Augustine Austin, a British West Indian who reputedly controls \$1,500,000 of real estate in the Harlem-Sugar Hill area, won't allow shady characters into what he calls his "Select Grade A houses." Probably the only racketeer who ever gained acceptance in Harlem society was Casper Holstein, one of the early "numbers kings." He was a dignified and extraordinarily taciturn man who donated large sums to Negro causes and provided annual grants for exceptional Negro writers and artists. Most Hill people earn from \$3000 to \$7000 a year, a range that is comfortable though hardly opulent. An estimated one fourth of them manage to pay the Hill's rentals of approximately \$16 to \$25 per room only by taking in boarders. "A lot of us supposedly fancy Hill dwellers are crowded in like sardines," one of them declared recently. Some gladly trade their privacy for a place on the Hill to escape a slum tenement; others do so to acquire a "good address," or because of a desire to mingle with Hill society.

The presence of numerous literary and entertainment people on the Hill

gives it a bohemian façade, but for the most part it is typically, and conscientiously, middle class, and its residents have often been charged with being "Negro Babbitts" and snobs. Claude McKay, a Negro writer who took a vinegary view of the migration from Harlem to the Hill, which occurred in the 1920s, said that it was inspired largely by the snobbish "urge of the Aframerican intelligentsia and élite to create an exclusive residential area." As a matter of fact, Negroes have always resented the irrational tendency of whites to regard their race as an undifferentiated lump, much as A. P. Giannini, president of the Bank of America, would resent being classed with the late Al Capone because of their common national origin; and many of them have emphasized rather too strenuously, that there are distinctions among Negroes, too, and that those who "belong" snub those who don't quite as devastatingly as this is done in any Westchester suburb. The Negro novelist who probably ranks as an all-time favorite in some Hill circles is Jessie Fauset whose themes were once caustically summed up by Martha Greuning, a literary critic, as follows:

I am writing this book because most white people still believe that all Colored People are cooks called Mandy and Pullman porters called George — but they aren't. They think that we all live in cottonfield cabins or in slums, but actually some of us live on Edgecombe Avenue or Chestnut Street. We don't all shout at Camp Meetings or even all belong to the Baptist or

Methodist Church. *Some of us are Episcopalians.* If you were privileged to visit our homes (which you aren't, for we are just as exclusive as you are) you would find bathtubs, sets of the best authors, and *etchings* on the wall. That's how refined we are. We have class distinctions, too. Our physicians' wives snub our hairdressers, our hairdressers our cooks, and so on down the line. . . .

Most Hill people, given a censor's prerogatives, would have books about Negroes deal exclusively with solid and respectable types like themselves. They regard *Uncle Remus* stories as an affront to their race, and often become passionately bitter over novels by Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Claude McKay, because these reveal the seamier side of Negro life to white readers. A Harlem newspaper which began some time ago to serialize Wright's *Native Son*, a story of a Negro boy driven berserk by jim-crow pressures, received so many protests that the editors were forced to drop it. The reluctance of some Sugar Hill residents to be linked with the lower strata of Negro life is such that, if asked about Harlem, they will reply, "Oh, I never go downtown," as though there was something vaguely repugnant to them in the idea itself.

### III

On the whole, however, there is probably less snobbishness on Sugar Hill than in comparable white communities. For one thing, social position there derives much less from wealth and genealogy, the usual bulwarks of social caste, than from edu-

cation and individual achievements. A postal clerk who has a college degree is often as acceptable in polite Hill circles as a physician or an insurance tycoon. "The co-mingling of different types is one of the most interesting aspects of Hill life," Ed Lewis, executive secretary of the New York branch of the National Urban League, remarked a while ago. Many Hill residents, of course, have "arrived" by way of menial occupations. Langston Hughes was a busboy in a Washington hotel when Vachel Lindsay read some of his poems and gave him a boost up into the literary life. Nearly everyone in the Negro upper class, for that matter, is a parvenu of sorts, which is to say that his position is earned rather than inherited.

Much of Sugar Hill life is indistinguishable from that of other middle-class communities. There is little of the "hip-deep luxury" with which the Hill is sometimes credited in Harlem gossip, but many Hill families employ full- or part-time maids, own cars, and buy their clothes in Fifth Avenue shops. College is regarded as the "accepted thing" for Hill youngsters. Most of the children — the average Hill family is quite small — are sent to Hunter, Horace Mann, the Little Brown Schoolhouse, or some other private school, but this is principally because the local public schools are notoriously poor, and because Hill mothers don't want to subject their children to the demoralizing influences of Harlem which has the highest juvenile delinquency rate in

New York. The Hill has a tennis club, the *Cosmopolitan*, on Convent Avenue, and a number of Hill families have summer homes in New Jersey or elsewhere in the New England area. Summer vacations often constitute an unhappy problem for Hill families, because few summer resorts will receive them. George S. Schuyler, a columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, once wrote to a hundred eastern resorts for reservations, and only one replied that he would be welcome. Before the war, some of the wealthier Negro families went abroad for their vacations to escape for a while from jim-crow humiliations. Dr. George Cannon, a prominent member of the Sugar Hill community, spends his vacations in Mexico.

A good deal of the Hill's social life, which is chronicled elaborately, if not always reverently, by Negro newspapers, revolves around Greek-letter fraternities and sororities, college alumni clubs, and the numerous fund-raising affairs sponsored by Negro agencies. One of the big affairs of the year is sponsored by the Howard University Club; the Beaux Arts ball, held under the auspices of the New York branch of the National Urban League, is another. The person in charge of arrangements for the ball this year was Mrs. Molly Moon, a New York social worker. Mrs. Moon and her husband, Henry Moon, who is an aide to Jack Kroll, chairman of the CIO's Political Action Committee, are extremely popular on the Hill, and their standing reflects the



Hill's values. One of the few formal Negro social affairs of the year is a Christmas ball given by the Comus Club, in Brooklyn, to which many Hill residents are invited. Writing about the Comus Club several years ago, Roi Ottley, a Negro journalist, observed:

Its annual functions, which mark the apex of the social year, are characterized by a strict decorum and an air of elegance. Men in white ties and correct tails, and women stunningly gowned in a brilliant array of colors, provide one of the irresistible sights of Negro life. . . . By employing a caterer at a recent affair—thus doing away with the proletarian practice of bringing shoe-boxes stuffed with sandwiches, fried chicken, and deviled eggs to formal functions—the Comus Club scored in a big way with those of social importance.

The Hill has a number of pleasant cafés, but its residents often go “downtown” for their convivial evenings to the cocktail lounge of the Hotel Theresa on 125th Street, or to Joe Louis’ new restaurant on the same street. Before he moved into an apartment over his restaurant, Louis, too, lived on the Hill. The “Hillites,” as they are sometimes referred to in Harlem, frequently attend plays and concerts in mid-town Manhattan, but fear of embarrassment usually keeps them away from most of the mid-town restaurants, hotels, and nightclubs. At one time, ironically, they were also discouraged from entering several of Harlem’s more fashionable nightclubs, including the Cotton Club, which Langston Hughes once

called “a jim crow club for gangsters and monied whites”; but the bans have since come down.

#### IV

More often than not, Hill residents entertain themselves and one another at their homes. There are numerous informal dinners and bridge and cocktail parties on the Hill, many of which are attended by whites who are associated with Hill people in the entertainment and literary professions, or in welfare and civil liberties work. Sugar Hill, in a social and in a biologic sense, forms a bridge between New York’s white and Negro communities. A number of white families and mixed families live there, and some Hill residents are so light-skinned that only a sense of dignity, or pride in their race, prevents them from passing as white. This has led some of them into painful and amusing situations. Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, became involved in a discussion with a Washington taxi cab driver not long ago, in the course of which the driver unsuspectingly confronted him with the stock question, “Would you like your daughter to marry a Negro?” White replied quietly, “My daughter probably will.”

Back in the 1920s, when Harlem was the vogue among New York’s fashionable and literary sets, there was even more interracial social life than there is now. This was the celebrated period of the “Black Renaissance,” which was ushered in by

*Shuffle Along*, the hit Negro musical revue, and which saw the débuts of Paul Robeson and Roland Hayes, the spectacular ascendancy of Negro jazz, and the emergence of a half-dozen fine Negro writers. The evidence that all Negroes weren't cooks and Pullman porters so titillated fashionable and literary people that they all but moved into Harlem *en masse*. Recalling the period in his autobiography, *Big Sea*, Langston Hughes says: "In the gin mills and speakeasies and nightclubs between 125th and 145th Streets, Eighth and Lenox, you met everybody from Buddy da Silva to Théodore Dreiser, Ann Pennington to the first Mrs. Eugene O'Neill." A Negro reporter, describing one Harlem party of the time, wrote effusively: "What a crowd! All classes and colors met face to face, ultra-aristocrats, bourgeoisie, Communists, Park Avenuers galore, bookers, publishers, Broadway celebs, and Harlemites giving each other the once-over. The social revolution is on."

The center of much of this social exuberance, which one participant recalls as being composed in equal parts of gin and highbrow conversation ranging from Freud to African drumbeats, was *Dark Tower*, the Harlem salon of Madame A'Lelia Walker, a statuesque "Mahogany Millionairess" who had inherited a fortune made by her mother with a hair de-kinking process. The elder Madame Walker, who began her rather astonishing career as a laundress in St. Louis, was Harlem's first social

dictator. Her daughter, who was famous for her gold-plated piano, among other things, entertained Negro and white celebrities extravagantly and joyously. *Dark Tower* was sometimes congested to the point where guests had difficulty in either entering or leaving it.

## v

Harlem's fame as a "Negro Mecca" during the 1920s drew migrants, including many of Sugar Hill's present residents, from all sections of the country. It was gay and comparatively prosperous; the members of its upper class were being accepted as equals, it seemed, by a large segment of the white community; and its writers and artists were being lionized. Editors hunted for Negro writers as though they were "white elephants or black roses," Carl Van Vechten declared in his book, *Nigger Heaven*, which did a good deal to make Harlem famous.

According to Langston Hughes, some Harlemites were convinced that the "millennium had come," and that from then on they would lead new lives in "green pastures of tolerance created by Countee Cullen, Ethel Waters, Claude McKay, Bojangles, Duke Ellington, and Alain Locke." The idea that Negroes could win acceptance on the basis of their individual merits flourished among members of the Harlem élite in the 1920s, and probably accounted for the migration of many to Sugar Hill.

Few Sugar Hill residents still re-

gard themselves as members of an exclusive and privileged community. The depression was particularly abrasive on Negroes, and it forced those of them who had previously aspired to equality as individuals to see that they could get it only by standing and fighting with the less favored members of their race. This change is reflected in the fact that the NAACP, which until ten years ago drew most of its financial support from whites, is today supported mainly by Negroes. The more virulent snobs on Sugar Hill are now easily outnumbered by those who are deeply engaged by Negro problems. On the political level, many Hill residents who were quite conservative before the depression have become liberals of one sort or another, but there is probably no place in the country where political labels count for less. For example, last November the Manhattan Medical Society, some of whose leading members live on the Hill, supported the candidacy of Ben Davis, the Negro Communist councilman, though few of them are Communists or in sympathy with the Communist Party's purposes. They supported him, as one of them put it, "simply on the grounds that Davis, a Harvard graduate by the way, was doing a good job for the Negro people." Most of the Hill people who are active in Negro organizations are identified

with the northern, or radical, Negro leadership, as distinct from the southern leadership, which often follows the more or less conciliatory line set down by Booker T. Washington, and whose members are now referred to scornfully as "Uncle Toms."

This distinction has been fairly sharp since the early 1900s, when William E. B. Du Bois, who is Sugar Hill's most distinguished resident, began to attack Booker T. Washington's view that Negroes would be wise not to insist on their right to all political and civil liberties and to higher education. It was Du Bois who, in the course of his debate with Washington, coined the phrase, "talented tenth." He said that the "Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men," and that the "best and most capable of [Negro] youth must be schooled in the colleges and universities of the land. . . . Not too many college-bred men, but enough to leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the talented tenth to leadership." A good many Sugar Hill people think of themselves as "leaven," but most of them, a Negro journalist remarked not long ago, "are simply decent, respectable, middle-class people who want to live comfortably or gracefully, depending on their incomes, and who detest jim-crow but don't intend to do much about it."

# FACTS ABOUT STERILITY

BY GENEVIEVE PARKHURST

IN THE last twenty years medical science has learned a good deal about the causes of so-called sterility in both men and women. Formerly, a married woman who had been unable to conceive would have been told by most doctors that she was "sterile" and that little or nothing could be done about it. Not infrequently the news would embitter her husband and he would demand a divorce. (It would scarcely have occurred to him that perhaps he, not his wife, was responsible for their childless state.)

Since then, the studies of Dr. William H. Cary, a New York gynecologist and sterility specialist, and of many other investigators in medical centers throughout the country have shown that forty-one out of every hundred marriages once thought barren can become fruitful.

The definition of sterility must be clearly understood. In medical terms, sterility means an inability on the part of a man or woman to perform his or her full part in the process of procreation. A woman who does not ovulate is sterile. A man who has no sperm cells is sterile. In this sense few men and women are sterile. But there

are men and women, otherwise normally healthy, whose fertility has been lowered or impaired in one way or another. In such cases, whether the impairment exists on the husband's side or on the wife's or on both, parenthood is not impossible.

Although it seems true that most childlessness arises from imperfect fertility on the part of the woman, recent statistics indicate a much larger proportion of masculine responsibility than was previously recognized. Available figures on childless marriages indicate that 10 per cent of the husbands are sterile. In 16 per cent of such marriages, the man's fertility is below the level essential to impregnation. In 7 per cent it is low enough to make the husband an accessory to the fact of his wife's inability to bear a child. There is reason to believe, say the specialists, that the total male disability may amount to more than 33 per cent.

Lowered fertility and a lack of virility are not the same thing at all, but some men refuse to believe it. Identifying the two, they choose to keep their pride rather than submit to tests which may reveal an easily

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GENEVIEVE PARKHURST has written for many magazines, and was an associate editor of Pictorial Review. This article was checked for accuracy by an eminent gynecologist.

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rectifiable condition. A case in point is that of an attractive young woman, married for five years, who told the doctors at the Maternity Center Association in New York City that she wanted a child but seemed unable to have one. Could anything be done for her? The sterility specialist to whom she was referred gave her a thorough examination with the accompanying tests. He took down her personal health history and that of her family. A careful study produced the verdict that she had all the capacities for a perfect mother. The suggestion was made that it might be a good idea for her husband to drop in.

Tears filled her eyes. "He couldn't take it," she replied. "It might break up our marriage. Rather than risk that I'll reconcile myself to going without a family."

## II

The conditions leading to infertility vary widely. Normally, conception takes place when the male cell (spermatozoon) encounters and fertilizes the female cell (ovum) on its way through the oviduct (Fallopian tube). Any factor which prevents conception or its subsequent fruition is an enemy to productivity. Some conditions require only a slight adjustment or minor operation, while others demand prolonged treatment; and there are some which science has still to overcome.

The factors which contribute to infertility are too various to catalog in their entirety. The most important

of them fall into several general categories.

A frequent cause of arrested motherhood is occluded oviducts, which bar the ova from passage through the Fallopian tube. Quite typical was Janet's disability. After four years of childless marriage she and her husband consulted an authority in the field. Examinations, tests and medical histories were carefully studied. The husband was found to be at the peak of his fertility. Janet's medical history revealed that when she was thirteen an operation for appendicitis, with an aftermath of peritonitis, infected the tubes, and as a result they had become occluded. Careful treatment succeeded in reopening the oviducts, and a year later Janet had her first child.

Any prolonged fever or local infection may result in this kind of obstruction. Sometimes the tubes are closed by induced abortion. Treatment for occluded tubes is not always simple; at times it is even necessary to remove them.

Psychological disturbances requiring but slight adjustment may also prevent conception. This was true with Nancy, who was dominated by an exacting, egotistical husband. On their honeymoon he told her in no uncertain terms that he wanted a large family — especially sons. He had to be sure that the family name would be perpetuated.

Two years went by without Nancy's becoming pregnant. Her husband hinted that unless a child were forthcoming in another year he would

have to have a divorce. Realizing that this nagging was bringing Nancy close to a nervous breakdown, her mother took her to a sterility clinic, where it was found that she suffered from nothing more than nervous tension. The doctor suggested that her husband pay a visit to the clinic.

The suggestion raised a domestic storm. When it subsided, Nancy's husband grudgingly agreed to see the doctor, but only with the understanding that he would not submit to tests or examinations. The doctor told him bluntly that he was at fault. His fertility might not actually be impaired, but it might just as well be, for he had lowered his wife's by constant threats and accusations which had affected her nervous system. He left the doctor's office a subdued man. When his bluster gave way to gentleness and understanding, Nancy's nerves relaxed. A careful diet built up her health. The following year she had her first baby, a son now five years old. She also has a girl of two, and another child is on the way.

Any sustained nervous tension such as Nancy suffered may act as a contraceptive; slackening of the tension may result in pregnancy. Thus it occasionally happens that couples who adopt a child, having given up hope for a family of their own, find soon after that they are on the way to becoming parents themselves.

Some women who conceive readily are unable to carry a child through to live birth. This defect may be constitutional, or it may be that the hus-

band's spermatozoa were immature or weakened. In other cases glandular disturbances may lower a woman's chances of becoming a mother. Recently another cause of stillbirth has been brought to light. It is a blood characteristic known as the Rh factor. Fifteen per cent of the white race lack the Rh factor, and whenever either one of the potential parents is a negative Rh there is trouble insofar as procreation is concerned: what happens is that the antibodies or disease-fighting organisms of the Rh negative parent destroy the red corpuscles of the Rh positive parent. This means that if a prospective mother happens to be one of the 15 per cent who do not have the Rh factor, and her husband belongs to the Rh positive group, her blood literally destroys her own baby. As it takes time for antibodies to work up a strong offensive, the first child of such a union may escape, but the second one seldom does. An even more dangerous situation arises if the mother has had an Rh positive blood transfusion previous to conception; then her own life and that of her first baby are gravely imperiled. The remedy—and it does not always work—is a transfusion of Rh negative for both mother and child, and well-equipped hospitals now list Rh negative blood banks as an essential.

### III

A common offender against productivity is ill health during adolescence. In 1941, Dr. Cary reviewed 255 con-

secutive cases from his private practice. In each case both mates were given careful study. He found that 33 per cent of the wives had a teen-age history bearing directly on their fertility. A later analysis of one hundred consecutive cases in which youthful disturbances were a deterrent to adult fecundity in one or both mates made it possible to determine what these conditions were. In this latter study, forty-nine of the wives had once had appendectomies with complications, glandular disturbances, malnutrition, anemia, scarlet fever, overwork, or excessively strenuous participation in athletics.

In forty-five of the one hundred husbands, fertility had been undermined by these difficulties in earlier years: appendectomy, severe mumps, nervous breakdown, poor general health, hypothyroidism, obesity, venereal disease, local physical injury, sexual neuroticism and over-exercise. The fact is that any condition which weakens the strength and motility of the spermatozoa and the quantity of the seminal fluid may render a man unproductive.

One such definite cause of sterility is working with X-rays. The case of Peter and Ann, childless through twenty years of marriage, serves as an illustration. During their earlier years of marriage, Ann had visited gynecologists and sterility specialists here and abroad and had submitted to several minor operations. Nothing helped. Peter, who was a scientist, never dreamed that his laboratory

work might be interfering with their marriage. Throughout their married life, Peter had worked a great deal with X-rays. Given a sabbatical holiday, he and Ann set up camp in the mountains, leading a vigorous outdoor life. In three months Ann became pregnant. The opinion of a sterility specialist was that the X-rays had temporarily sterilized Peter.

Aside from the disturbances noted, any number of peculiar causes of infertility are brought to light from time to time. Sometimes they are associated with an allergy or temperamental quirk. Dr. Lyle Phillips of Honolulu reports a case of sterility in which the husband was a chain smoker. Tests indicated a high fertility level in the wife but not in the husband; something had reduced the motility of his spermatozoa. Neither diet nor any of the prescribed remedies helped him. Finally he stopped smoking. In three months, all traces of nicotine disappeared from his system, and his wife became pregnant.

Another case was that of a wife who was greatly overweight. After seven years of childless marriage, she consulted her family physician. He placed her on a carefully regulated diet, and she lost forty pounds in six months. Before the year was over a child was on the way. Now she has three healthy youngsters ranging from five years to six months of age. Another apparently healthy wife was found to be suffering from local acidity. Its cure cleared her way to motherhood.

There is no cure-all for infertility.



Hormones sometimes help; thyroid, intelligently administered, is occasionally effective; and more recently, pregnant mare's serum has proved of value. The Cornell Medical Center's Sterility Clinic in New York City cites four long-standing cases which this serum cured almost immediately.

Diets rich in Vitamin E — butter, wheat germ oil, whole wheat, rolled oats, milk, spinach, lettuce — are known to have aided in raising fertility levels. The elimination of lard, which oxidizes Vitamin E, has been helpful. Reduction when overweight, building up when underweight, rest, exercise, vacation, sunlight, ultraviolet rays and, in certain cases, sex hormones together with other treatment have proved effective.

A problem as complicated as that of sterility demands the services of a specialist. Where such authorities are not available, a good general practitioner can do a great deal by raising the general health levels of husband and wife. He can guide them in correcting such possible causes of infertility as anemia, low blood pressure, hypothyroidism and nervous exhaustion. Radical measures, such as artificial impregnation, should not be attempted except under expert supervision.

Indeed, whenever possible, a special investigator in the field should be

consulted. The Maternity Center Association of New York suggests that young childless couples who have done nothing to prevent conception should see a competent gynecologist, preferably one who has had some experience in aiding fertility. The younger the would-be parents, of course, the better the chances are of straightening out whatever difficulties may be interfering.

They further advise: "Don't put off having your first child until the early bloom of marriage has worn off. And never resort to an abortion. There is a wide difference between wisely planned parenthood and the hazardous methods of avoiding it."

No nationwide statistics are available on unwanted infertility, but Dr. Cary has supplied some figures on New York City where there took place in a single year, 1943, 7600 marriages which are now, four years later, known to be barren. Of these, Dr. Cary states, as many as 2900 might have been made fruitful by modern methods of treatment. Since New York represents about one twentieth of the country's total population, he added, it does not take an excess of imagination to visualize what the total number of barren marriages for the United States may be — an observation that should give young couples something to think about.

# THE HOW AND WHY OF NAME-CHANGING

BY HELEN P. WULBERN

EVER since surnames first began to be used in twelfth-century England, the English-speaking people have been busy discarding names they disliked and taking new ones to suit their particular fancies. In 1946 the United States apparently reached an all-time high in legal name-changing.

Why are so many Americans eager to discard their old family names? An examination of the petitions on file makes it plain that the majority wish to Anglicize their names. Mr. Grunwald now translates his thoughts into English, why not his name? He understandably takes Greenwood. Mr. Weisbrod, who may not be impressed by the happy connotation white-bread has for millions all over the world today, decides on Westbrook. However, Mr. Capsuleas is content with a simple translation into Mr. Capsule. Rothstein and Rozofsky prefer Ross, while Thomas Mikolajczak and Helen Judson Birkenmayer follow an increasingly popular preference for shedding bulky surnames as redundant. In the end they emerge as Mr. Thomas and Miss Judson.

Because everyone, from college professors to salesgirls, continually mispronounces and misspells long foreign names many Americans of foreign descent are changing their names today to make life easier for themselves. Often they merely shorten them. Wasylyzyn becomes Wayne, Wertheimer Werth, Walenkiewicz abbreviates to Walen, Barbagelata to Barba, Brucellania to Bruce.

Early in the war, appeals for changes were greater than at any time in New York's history. Germans, to a lesser extent Italians, and many Jews who felt the burden of racial prejudice applied in great numbers. Wilhelminas and Guiseppantonios were shed along with enemy surnames. A Mr. Himlar asked to change to Hamilton, a Fuehrer to Scheer. L. Heitler became Hilton, a Mr. Tokio became Taber and D. Mussolini said he could no longer abide his name. (Back in 1937 many Russian Trotskys sought to change for quite different reasons.)

Often stepchildren request their new father's name; actors and actresses seek permission to retain their stage

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HELEN P. WULBERN is a native of Charleston, South Carolina, who attended Smith College, later worked in department-store advertising in New Haven, and afterwards did some free-lance writing, including movie and theatrical publicity, in New York. She was also a fashion editor for the Fairchild Publications for a number of years.

names. Robert Taylor recently decided to forget about being born Spangler Arlington Brugh and Barbara Stanwyck appealed to legalize her individual, foreign-sounding name, dispensing with Ruby Stevens.

The anguished cry of many a petitioner reiterates, "My name is embarrassing." In Oregon, Otto Hell begged a sympathetic judge to let him be known henceforth as Hall. He could no longer tolerate his friends calling him O. Hell. In Baltimore during prohibition, a family named Booze changed quietly to Hughes. Mr. Grab-off of New York thought the business implications of his name damaging, while George Washington Quick contended his illustrious appellation "subjected him to jests, banter and humorous raillery." Loath to sever his presidential connections, however, he substituted James Canfield Monroe. And many years ago a man by name of Hogg asked to change to Hoge. Whereupon some heartless wag wrote:

Hogg by name and Hogg by nature,  
But Hoge by act of Legislature.

Records turn up reasons for change as assorted as a box of chocolates — some sweet, some bitter, some quite nutty. Miss Gussie Goldberg, having used Gertrude Gould for years, asked regretfully to have Gould moved over into middle place to make way for Coburn, which her brothers preferred. A Mr. Mestjian came back to court to say sadly his friends just wouldn't use his new name, so could he please return to Garmest? Then there was Mr. Worms, a candy and cigar store

operator, who was so grateful to the grandparents who had raised him that he wished to assume their name. A Mr. Cohen complained there were so many names identical to his in the phone book, he was losing the business of customers unfamiliar with his first name. Still others prefer to drop their baptismal names in the interest of originality. (Presidents Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson were examples of this when they cast off their first names, Stephen and Thomas.)

## II

Although each petitioner is required to state the reason for the desired change, many shy away from their real motivations. One common explanation, which satisfies many judges, is that such-and-such a name has been used for years, and the petitioner has become known by it in business and among friends.

In New York it is absolutely lawful for a man to take a new name without recourse to the courts. The law recognizes it as a fundamental right. He can say to his friends tomorrow, "This is my new name," and whatever obligations he assumes in that name will be binding. The Civil Rights Law says: "Aliens or any persons may change their names at any time without asking court's approval and their new names will be as effectively assumed and recognized as if provided for by court order unless fraud was inspiration for change."

Nevertheless, many do go to the trouble of securing a court order. The

statutory method has some incontrovertible advantages. It is officially recommended as "speedy, definite and a matter of record, so as to be easily proved even after the death of all contemporaneous witnesses." One justice recommends it to "disarm those who would attach an ulterior motive to the desire for the change."

Those without a court order may have difficulty trying to obtain a visa with a birth certificate bearing the discarded name. When they register in Social Security or become involved in business difficulties their actions may be misconstrued. Father Divine's followers once found they were dropped from election registration rolls because they had used names that were only informally adopted — their spiritual names.

Most states have statutes covering name changes. Some differ from New York's. Nebraska requires "proof of proper and reasonable cause." In Pennsylvania only by court order may any person "assume a name different from the name by which such person is known."

But could you close your eyes and pick any name your heart desired — Franklin Delano Roosevelt or Lana Turner? You could try, but the judge would almost certainly see an intent to deceive. Yet, if the complete name is not identical with a famous person's — if you chose only Franklin Delano or coupled Donald with Roosevelt — your application might be granted.

Well-known families have sought before to prevent others from assum-

ing names that distinguished them or their ancestors. They have involved themselves in bitter lawsuits and almost invariably lost. There was the emancipated slave, Rose, who, along with her son, assumed her former master's surname of Du Bonlay. In 1867 the Du Bonlays of the Isle of St. Lucia took steps to restrain Rose's son, then in business there, from using their surname. The case was dismissed with the opinion that "the proudest patronymic in the land is available to the lowliest individual."

Then, about sixty years ago, there arrived from Vilna, Lithuania, a Mr. Michael Kabotchnick who settled in Massachusetts and started building a successful business manufacturing Indian suits for children. He shortened his name, spelling it the same way as did the Cabots of Boston, who soon objected in court. Mr. Kabotchnick had assumed the name without obtaining a court order, and the court ruled against him. So he and the Kabotchnick clan, settled in Brockton and the Boston suburbs, changed again, this time to Kabot, and later, to avoid confusion, to Kabat.

But in Philadelphia it was a different story with Michael's brother, Lazarus, who had petitioned legally to take the name of Cabot. Here also the Cabots, as well as the Pennsylvania society of the order of Founders and Patriots of America, indignantly protested. "To allow petitioners of foreign birth to assume and use well-known and in many instances, historical family names," they contended,

"would mislead persons as to the origin and ancestry of those assuming the name. It would also constitute an unjust interference with the right of the persons now using the historical name." Nevertheless, this Mr. Kabotchnick was granted the right to become Mr. Cabot.

### III

Just as vehemently indignant as the Cabots were the members of the New York law firm of Ferris & Ferriss in 1942 when a New York attorney, Adolph E. Finkelstein secured a court order to change his name to Ferris. The application of Ferris & Ferriss to have the order vacated was denied by Supreme Court Justice McGeehan, who delivered a lengthy opinion, heavily freighted with his own feelings on the subject.

This court found that the purported change was not for any fraudulent or wrongful purpose and accordingly granted the permission. The name of Finkelstein is an ancient and honorable name, but if the petitioner, in the pursuit of happiness, the right conferred upon all Americans through the efforts of men like the ancestors of the illustrious Ferris family, desires to forsake his original name for another, that is permissible under our system of jurisprudence.

American blood is a rich mixture of many people. It has a peculiar aversion to discrimination and religious intolerance. . . . Names are relatively unimportant. . . . Family names are not copyrighted. Every famous man has namesakes not related to him by blood or marriage and the assumed name is generally viewed as a compliment to the man whose name has been assumed.

On the other hand, there are those who think such ill feeling and court actions could be avoided if, instead of selecting rare and historically distinguished names, petitioners would pick commonplace ones or else create names distinctively their own.

Many famous families have changed their names, but individualized them in some fashion — by spelling, pronunciation or translation. General Pershing's family was once Pfoersching, the Hoover name formerly Huber, the Boston Lowells Lowle, Rockefeller Roggenfelder. The Belmonts, so it has been said, preferred the French to their native German, Schonberg, for "beautiful mountain."

Lord Louis Mountbatten's family once used the German for mount — it was Battenberg until World War I. Originally Washington was Wessyngton, meaning a person dwelling on a meadowland where the creek runs into the sea.

To effect a legal change of names takes forty days; a lawyer who will help fill out the petition; court fees (\$1.00 in City Court, \$3.00 in Supreme Court in New York City); advertisement of the order when granted in a newspaper specified by the judge (in the *New York Law Journal* the cost of the ad is said to run to between fifteen and twenty dollars); and filing of proof of publication and petition for the court records.

Take the case of Mr. James of the West Indies, a concert pianist who convinced the judge his name would

look better on billboards without Lushington and Wendell to weigh it down. His application to drop them asserted, according to requirements, that he had never been convicted of any crime or offense or been judged a bankrupt, had no outstanding debts or judgments, etc., under the name he wished to abandon.

Had Mr. James ever been jailed for a major crime, he no doubt would have had to continue to get along as best he could with Lushington and Wendell. Even if he had committed a minor offense his new name would have been recorded with the District Attorney. Just as an extra precaution, the New York Secretary of State is sent all name changes to examine for any possibilities of commercial fraud. The New York City Court states that, "There was more name-changing this past year than any other in the history of New York." In the last dozen years it has mounted over 500 per cent. In the last five, this court has granted court orders to 4523 petitioners, and the New York Supreme Court has given 1603. Much the same thing, court clerks say, is going on all over the rest of America. "Some judges," they add, "will sign almost any petition. Others frequently find a 'reasonable objection.'"

In the case of Mr. Taminosian, a Howling Dervish in the Barnum & Bailey Circus, who wished to use the name of Mahommed Nadir, under which he was admitted to the religion of Islam, the "reasonable objection" was his wife. She much preferred his

old name, she wailed. So the court shook its head and said the "sensibilities of the wife and children should be taken into consideration."

Many a judge has turned down petitions of alien refugees, contending it is time enough when they become citizens. Nor are children always allowed to assume their stepfathers' names. When one small boy's irate father objected to his ex-wife's changing their son's name to her second husband's, Justice Callahan figuratively patted the father on the back. The court, he ruled "should not interfere with the usual custom of succession to paternal surname, nor foster any unnatural barrier between father and son."

There was Mrs. Koroglian who bore her husband twins when he was in a sanatorium at Saranac and five months later divorced him. When she wished to change the twins' names to Lyons, the husband did not oppose, though he did not join in the petition. Supreme Court Justice Leary denied the application, pointing out that both parents should join in it.

#### IV

For hundreds of years English-speaking people have been doing considerable plain and fancy name-changing. A thousand years ago we had no surnames. They were unknown in the England of William the Conqueror and not adopted until the middle of the twelfth century. Men were known only by baptismal names. A knight would name all his sons Richard, but

to distinguish them, call one Rick, another Ricket, another Richey. John, son of Richard, acquired one of the first Teutonic surnames, Richardson. Various prefixes or affixes denoted "son of." In Norman it was Fitz, in Scotch Gaelic, Mac, in Welsh, Ap, and in Irish, O'. (In Lancashire to hear one man called Bill's o' Jack's o' Dick's o' Harry's o' Louis hasn't been uncommon even in recent years.)

Surnames were not inherited. Different ones were often used by brothers. They were adopted by the son or conferred by a nosy neighbor who began calling you Moody or Little or Goodman, depending on what he thought of your disposition, size or morals. He was often far from flattering. Men looked about and began taking names chiefly from places, frequently from trades — Mason, Tailor, Smith or Cooper. They went on to nature, astronomy, foods, metals, articles, even to oaths such as the Norman Pardie or Teutonic Bigot. They made surnames of women's names — Cecil from Cecilia or Betts from Elizabeth. And they went constantly about the business of changing them.

They did it with suffixes and prefixes, ignorantly mispronouncing and misspelling them, adding or dropping letters to their heart's content. A tobacconist in Dublin by name of Halfpenny struck several letters from his name and emerged as Hapen. His descendants changed it into Alpen, later added Mac and thus became the Mc'Alpens, which literally means descendants of kings.

The "h" which the English have a way of pronouncing where it isn't, has altered many names — Omer to Homer and Olt to Holt. There is a story told of a child brought to the font for baptism.

"What name?" asked the parson.

"John," was the reply.

"Anything else?"

"John, honly," said the godparent, putting in an "h" where it was not needed.

"John Honly, I baptise thee," continued the clergyman. . . . The child was entered with the double name. Perhaps his descendants still use it.

There were innumerable prefixes and suffixes constantly tacked on — "thor" meaning god (Thurman), or "an" meaning man (Cowan for a cowman). St. Clair became Sinklar to phonetically match spelling with pronunciation and "w" changed to "v" when there was an influx of Huguenots. Many objectionable names have long since disappeared. A Marjory Hoggeflesh has no recorded descendants.

England's altering of names was partially arrested by Henry VIII's regulation that all births, marriages and deaths be recorded in every parish. Yet, as in America today, there is no positive legal provision against change, though a Royal License is usually obtained in court to allay suspicions of hidden identity or fraud.

More recently name-changers in England have gone in for class. Not only have De, St., and Le been acquired in French fashion, but the



hyphenated name has become the rage. "Looks well, sounds aristocratic," reasoned name-changers. Early double names were sometimes egregiously descriptive, as Savage-Butcher or Sporton-Tailor. While many merely sought individuality for commonplace names, as in the case of John Stanley-Brown, name additions frequently got out of hand. A Thurlow family became Hovell-Thurlow-Cumming-Bruce or the Philip Lybbe Powyses thought you couldn't have enough of a good thing and turned into the Philip Lybbe Powys Lybbes. Many name changes meant a grant of a coat of arms.

While names in England became more elaborate, in America the simpler-the-better rule applied. Proof of this lay in the Americanizing of foreign and Indian names into the combinations easiest to pronounce and spell, until today our twenty-five most popular surnames are all plain-tailored. The top five are Smith, Johnson, Brown, Miller and Jones. And rarely does a Smith change his name unless, perhaps, business reasons compel him to distinguish himself from over a million other Smiths.

Even actors and writers have chosen stage and pen names which, while often distinctive, are rarely elaborate.

Consider Maude Adams (real name, Maude Ewing Kiskadden), Lynn Fontanne (Lily Louise Fontanne), Joan Crawford (Mary Fay LeSueur), Bob Hope (Lester Townes Hope) or Ginger Rogers (Virginia Katharine McMath).

The same holds true for many writers, including Michael Arlen (Dickran Kouyoumdjian), O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) and Nelly Bly (Elizabeth Bisland). The more elaborate pen names, fashionable for a time in American literature, were often discarded. Speak of the author Amabel Penfeather and no one would know you were referring to J. Fenimore Cooper.

Today many people are trying to decide whether to change their names.

The law implies it is a question of importance only to these people. But no matter how the name sounds, it can always be dignified or distinguished. So perhaps, after all, it may be better to keep a German-sounding name like Eisenhower, that has become illustriously American, or a name open to misinterpretation like Doo-little, which stands for rare accomplishment, or a simple name like Al Smith, which speaks for itself.



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## THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS

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### *That sharks hunger for human flesh*

The man-eating shark of fiction is a fearsome thing. He subsists wholly upon human flesh and his wrath on being denied is dreadful to behold. Captain Cook relates that an "enraged" and "monstrous" specimen swam hungrily about his ship and when no "victim for his hungry belly" was forthcoming furiously attacked the anchor chain, leaving thereon "deep scars" from his sawlike teeth. If he can't get a living man he'll settle for a cadaver. He knows when someone is dead, or even dying, aboard a ship and will follow the vessel for leagues in gruesome expectation. "There's a stiff on that bark," observes the experienced mariner Kitchell, in Frank Norris' *Moran of the Lady Letty*, when he perceives the water around the *Lady Letty* to be "alive" with sharks. And, blow the man down, he's right!

There is apparently a grain of truth in it. Sharks are scavengers and will eat anything dead, human or fish. They might attack a wounded

man in the water, though authentic instances of even that are not common. But the Navy assured its fliers of World War II in a special pamphlet that "there is practically no danger that an unwounded man floating in a life jacket will be attacked by a shark." And old shark fishermen agree.

### *That homing pigeons are guided by some mysterious "instinct" or "sixth sense"*

The fact is that many of them *don't* come home. At one point in the war the RAF announced that of 17,000 carrier pigeons dropped by parachute to Allied soldiers and agents in enemy territory, 16,000 had never been heard of again. And that seems to be approximately the average return-expectancy from pigeon droppings of that nature.

If you want to be sure of having your bird back in your hand you must, according to the literature on the subject, observe two simple precautions: you must train it carefully and not take it out of sight of familiar

landmarks. The Signal Corps of the United States Army doesn't expect its birds to come back over terrain with which training flights have not familiarized them (see the *New York Times Magazine*, April 27, 1941, p. 14).

A series of experiments conducted by Professors C. S. Platt and R. S. Dare of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and reported in *Science* (April 27, 1945) may serve as a useful yardstick with which to evaluate some of the stories one hears of remarkable "homing instincts." The professors first released six untrained birds at a distance of eighty miles from their loft. None of them was ever seen again. They then released ten birds which had had eight training flights over distances up to half of the distance at which they were released for the test flight. Two of these found their way back to the home loft, one thirty days later and the other forty-eight days later. (The nature of the "instinct" that delayed them will be suggested by a study of boys coming home from school.) They finally released nine birds individually; these had flown as a training group over the entire course. Three of these never turned up but the rest did pretty well. The professors' conclusion, a restrained one under the circumstances, was that there was no evidence to support the belief in an instinct that automatically brings homing pigeons home.

It is true that many trained birds have found their way home, but the

conclusion of Professor Donald R. Griffin of Harvard, who has made such flights his special study, is that it needs no "sixth sense" or other supernatural powers to account for it: they probably use familiar landmarks, found by "exploration," together with "simple geographical, meteorological and ecological relationships."

*That a man has a right to his own opinion*

Not one man in a hundred thousand can lay claim to an opinion by right of discovery. Most of what pass for opinions were begotten by Folly out of Ignorance and have long been in the public domain. A man has certainly no moral right to an opinion merely because it's his own. He should, as Dr. Johnson sagely observed, inform himself and think justly. He does not even have a political right to his opinion, even on so personal a matter as religion, if his holding it is deemed contrary to the public interest. Thus Judge William Cramer of Dallas ruled recently that Mrs. Mertie Mitchell's opinion that God would cure her arthritic, twelve-year-old son should be ignored and the boy given medical attention, and it is not likely that his decision would be reversed on an appeal.

The only "right" that a man has to an opinion is the civil right to be free of bodily harm for uttering them. And even that is strictly limited. If your opinions are seditious or such as

to incite others to violence, you may be incarcerated. If it is your opinion that another man's wife is a whore and you voice that opinion in his hearing he has, in many states, not only the privilege but the duty of beating you up if he is able to.

Opinions, however deluded, are thought to merit respect if only they are "sincere." But the sincerity with which it is held is irrelevant to the validity of an opinion. Half the horrors of history have sprung from opinions sincerely held by good men and women.

*That you can't improve on Nature*

In the equation of God and Nature which became one of the strange fruits of the Romantic Movement, most of the attributes of the older deity were transferred to the supplanter. We became "children of Nature" where we had formerly been "children of God," and "Old Mother Nature" was thought to exercise the same parental solicitude in our behalf, tempered with the same salutary chastisement when needed, that her predecessor had exercised. "Divine impulses" were replaced by equally astonishing "natural impulses." Sinful men formerly cast their burdens on the Lord and found peace in His will. Jaded businessmen, living an "unnatural" life in cities, "take a load off their shoulders" by going to dude ranches or fishing lodges and "living as nature intended them to."

In all religions it has been the height

of impiety to vie with the god. Arachne got herself changed to a spider for entering a spinning contest and Cassiopeia came to a worse end for entering a beauty contest with a goddess. Even when the god issued the challenge, the mortal was supposed to decline. When God asked Job if he could draw up Leviathan with a hook, it was plainly no time for Job to exhibit his fishing trophies.

Nature demands the same discretion from her worshippers and nothing is more common on their lips than that you "can't improve on" her ways. Fortunately for the devotee, however, heretics *have* improved on nature, and that to a considerable extent, or he would never enjoy the hours in Nature's bosom that he does. Most modern manufacturing constitutes an improvement on nature. Steel is not a "natural" substance. Rayon has qualities that cotton lacks. Nylon is superior, in certain ways, to silk. Synthetic rubber is better for certain purposes than natural rubber. And so on, to perdition.

*That the parrot alone among birds can talk*

The popularity of Poe's raven does not seem to have lessened the popular assumption that a parrot's "talking" is a singular accomplishment.

Actually many birds can imitate the human voice. Poe's prophet of evil differed from other tame members of his species by confining himself to one ominous word. "To chatter like a magpie" was until very recently,

when such birds were kept as pets, a household phrase. Choughs, or crows, stopped cawing, in olden times, long enough to reveal in a few well-chosen words "the secret man of blood." It was a starling that Hotspur wanted to have taught "to speak nothing but Mortimer" after King Henry ordered him never to let him hear that name again.

*That bats get in your hair*

The affection lavished on birds and the repugnance felt for bats is a curious thing, for, after all, birds are merely feathered reptiles while bats are mammals, warm-blooded and furry. The bat is harmless, keeps out of sight most of the time and, from the evolutionary point of view, has been commendably enterprising.

Nonetheless, the revulsion the little creatures inspire in many people is intense. Perhaps it is an age-old fear of the dark and all things that move in it. Demons were always given bats' wings, while angels were always given feathered wings.

Be the cause what it may, the loathing is unquestionably there and two of the commonest "explanations" for it are that bats "carry bedbugs" and "get in women's hair." Professor Donald R. Griffin of Harvard University, who has studied bats for years and handled thousands of them, says that they do not carry bedbugs or any other parasite that can be transferred to human beings, and that they are far too clever flyers to get entangled in anything as obvious as hair.

*That wines continually improve with age*

From the moment wines are sealed in glass bottles all change for the better ceases — and they are usually not put into bottles until the full advantages of aging have been achieved. Of course, if the bottle is not airtight the wine can change for the worse.

Some confusion as to the nature of wine has been caused by a misunderstanding of the parable of the new wine and old bottles in the minds of that estimable part of our population whose acquaintance with alcoholic beverages is limited to biblical references. The basis of their misunderstanding is the fact that the "bottles" of the parable were wineskins ("bottle" and "boot" are etymologically akin). Wineskins, when old, are dry and cracked and so sure to "perish" if filled with new wine in which fermentation has not wholly ceased.

*That blood pressure should be "one hundred plus your age"*

Children and adolescents have lower blood pressure than adults. "Normal" blood pressure runs from approximately 90 to 140; so a man of twenty might well have a blood pressure of 120 and a man of forty a pressure of 140 and both be in excellent health. But there is no compulsion in such a correlation; a man of sixty who had a blood pressure of 160 would probably be better off if he had one lower. Most physicians now assume that, within normal limits, the lower the blood pressure the better.

# ON MISUNDERSTANDING RUSSIA

BY EUGENE LYONS

SEVERAL months ago sixteen clergymen and officials of church organizations dedicated themselves publicly and eloquently to the promotion of understanding of the people of Soviet Russia by the people of the United States. With the Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman as chairman, the doughty sixteen included the Right Rev. Charles K. Gilbert, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York; Dr. John R. Mott, chairman of the World's Committee of YMCAs; Metropolitan Benjamin, head of the Russian Orthodox Churches in the Americas; Dr. Louie D. Newton and Dr. Stanley I. Stuber, heads of the Southern and Northern Baptist Conventions respectively; Mrs. Ruth Worrell, executive secretary of the United Council of Church Women; Mrs. Leslie E. Swain, president of the Women's American Baptist Missionary Society; and Dr. Stephen H. Fritchman, editor of the *Christian Register*.

We omit a few names and associations to save space, but these suffice to show that it was a holy alliance calculated to awe the Godless League of Moscow, let alone God-fearing news-

paper readers in America. In the aggregate it seemed a gilt-edged guarantee of noble intentions.

The logic of their public declaration was flawless. "Ignorance breeds suspicion, suspicion breeds fear, fear breeds hate. And ignorance, suspicion and hate breed war." To head off war, men of good will and churchmen in particular must therefore strike at the root of the evil, which is ignorance. Accordingly the group announced "a broad program of education and information about the Soviet Union," including lectures, discussion groups for children and adults and above all, the preparation and dissemination of "authoritative current information on various phases of Soviet life and culture."

At one point their statement sagely declared that "peace will abide with us" provided "the people of the United States and of the Soviet Union retain a spirit of friendly cooperation and mutual admiration." The churchly sixteen acknowledged, that is to say, that friendship is a two-way street. But curiously, they failed to follow through on this acknowledgment. For their program, though ex-

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EUGENE LYONS is the author of *Assignment in Utopia*, *The Red Decade* and other books. He was the editor of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* from 1939 to 1944.

plicit on ways and means to generate the necessary spirit in America, forgot to mention how it would be generated in the Soviet people.

Either this was an oversight, or a corresponding Interchurch Committee of Soviet divines will soon announce an equivalent program for education and information about the United States inside Russia. The reverend ladies and gentlemen cannot be so completely isolated from the workaday world that they are unaware of the kind of information about American life, culture and good faith being fed to the citizenry of Russia.

We are content not to argue this point while waiting for the glad news out of Moscow about an Interchurch Committee devoted to the essential other half of the mutual program. Meanwhile let us look at a more serious aspect of the holy alliance.

The catch in the whole enterprise is that the committee was organized by and is an integral part of the American Russian Institute, which will provide the "authoritative information" to cure American ignorance on matters Soviet. And the Institute is one of the central Communist propaganda channels in this country!

Suppose that back in 1938-39 a committee of high-minded men of God had announced a project for educating Americans about life and culture in Nazi Germany — in itself a worthy cause. Suppose that, however, the committee had been mobilized by and was associated with the Ger-

man-American Bund, which would supply the information to be spread through churches and other channels. We would have been justified, surely, in deducing (1) that the committee was a sinister hoax or a low practical joke, and (2) that the churchmen thus aligned were either idiots or knaves.

Substitute Soviet Russia for Nazi Germany, the American Russian Institute for the German-American Bund, and the analogy is almost perfect. The only important point of difference — and this is the saving "out" for the victimized church people — is that the identity of the Bund as a Nazi mouthpiece is somewhat better known than the identity of the Institute as a Communist mouthpiece.

So far as end results are concerned, the mischief is of the same order, whatever the motives or confusions of the men and women snared into doing the job. In the name of God and peace, the American people will now be drenched with more Soviet propaganda. Naturally it will be the same stale brew of apologetics for terror, angled statistics and double-talk which the Institute has been peddling for many years. The Institute board includes such familiar apologists for Kremlin policies and purposes as Joseph E. Barnes, Harriet L. Moore, Arthur Upham Pope, Samuel J. Novick, Henry E. Sigerist, Ernest J. Simmons and Maxwell Stewart. Easing a camel through the eye of a needle would be no trick at all compared with getting facts derogatory of



Stalin's dictatorship past such a group.

Those of the Sockman Sixteen who joined up in full knowledge of the nature of this propaganda agency are plainly guilty of conniving in a hoax on religious-minded Americans. The others can plead absolution on the grounds of first-degree mental muddle. Should any of them still doubt that they are being played for suckers, let them test the fact by asking the Institute to prepare "authoritative" material on such matters as civil rights in Russia; concentration camps and forced labor; the current purge of culture; the liquidation of churches and churchmen from 1918 to date.

There is no dearth of Soviet subjects on which a church group could help educate the American people if it were intelligent, independent and self-activating rather than a holy incense to disguise totalitarian hogwash. Nor is there any dearth of information on these subjects.

One new source, hardly touched, has been made available since the end of the war. We refer to the half million or so Soviet subjects — overwhelmingly comprised of young men and women, of workers, peasants and intellectuals — who, finding themselves beyond their native frontiers through the exigencies of war, have refused to return home. The number would have run to many millions if the others had not been intimidated into returning or been forcibly repatriated to the Soviet Union.

Raised under the dictatorship, these new exiles represent a gold mine of fresh, authentic information on Soviet realities. We humbly recommend that the Interchurch Committee cut the umbilical chord joining it to the Institute, sterilize the wound, and make the mining of this rich new source its first educational project.

## II

The Interchurch Committee is not in itself terribly important: it is just another in a long array of false fronts set up in Stalin's behalf. We have gone into some detail only because it provides a recent and convenient case study in the old propaganda trick of covering misinformation with a self-righteous plea for "understanding." It is not so long ago that we were urged by certain people, in the name of fair play and the open mind, to "understand" the aspirations of Mussolini and even Hitler's achievement in restoring national discipline and liquidating unemployment.

When Communist-front organizations and notorious Soviet spokesmen claim that we must "understand Russia," only the most naïve and befuddled fail to understand that the megaphones are wired directly from the Kremlin. Their plea for understanding, we know, aims to close our eyes and hearts and minds to the unsavory facts of Soviet totalitarianism; in truth they want us to *misunderstand* and, insofar as we fail in this feat of self-deception, to *forgive* Russia.

Unfortunately the game is less

transparent when it is worked by individuals and organizations whose inspiration is less obviously Muscovite.

It was under the banner of "understanding Russia" that our former Ambassador to the USSR, Mr. Joseph E. Davies, presented his extraordinary stew of half-truths, *Mission to Moscow*. From a mountain of notes and reports Mr. Davies carefully selected passages and even individual paragraphs out of context to build up a favorable picture of Russia. The mendacity of the procedure is evidenced by the fact that to this day he has not made *the rest of those notes and reports* available to the public. Having discussed the matter with sundry people who helped in the job of selection, we know that a version closer to the truth and *refuting the Davies book* could readily be drawn out of the data the ex-Ambassador chose to suppress. Thus a notable contribution to *mis*-understanding of the Soviet facts was made in the name of broad-minded "understanding."

In 1944, while still Vice-President of the United States, Mr. Henry A. Wallace visited the Magadan-Irkutsk region of eastern Siberia, the worst slave-labor area in Russia and therefore in the world. There he consorted with Ivan Nikishov, one of the most notorious NKVD slave-masters and observed the work of Dalstroï, a huge NKVD development based entirely on forced labor.

Returning home, Mr. Wallace delivered speeches and wrote a book about the junket in which he glorified

the Siberian "pioneering" effort, which he compared to the opening of our own West. But he failed to mention that the "pioneers" were political prisoners and exiles transported not in covered wagons but in sealed cattle cars. That was his idea of helping Americans "understand Russia."

An even more startling and mischievous example of the same technique was on view recently in the pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*. The weekly published a series of three long, labored but forensically slick articles by one of the most notorious apologists for Kremlin policies, Mr. Edgar Snow. It was offered by the editors, self-consciously, in the name of "fair-minded" consideration of "all sides" of "the bewildering behavior of the Soviet Union in many parts of the world."

We do not recall that the magazine had been impelled by fair-mindedness to give any American admirer of Hitlerite aggressions a similar chance to present the Nazi side. In publishing a devil's advocate for the Soviet system and policies, the magazine acknowledges *an open mind* on certain issues, which hardly jibes with its claim of undivided faith in democracy, the American system and plain Christian decency. In any case, it would have been more forthright and more considerate of the innocent reader to ask Mr. Gromyko or William Z. Foster to write the apologia, instead of entrusting it to someone whose pretended objectivity only added confusion to the arguments.

Surely the *Saturday Evening Post* would not claim that that Soviet case had not already been adequately presented to the American people. As long as so many false-front organizations, left-wing newspapers and periodicals, pro-Soviet commentators and writers, Senator Peppers and Henry Wallaces and Edgar Snows continue to write and talk and call mass-meetings, the fable that the capitalists are suppressing Stalin's side of the story (itself a Kremlin falsehood) will hardly pass muster with the more intelligent readers and stockholders of the magazine. Quantitatively, it happens, the Kremlin's case has in these last six years received fuller treatment than the anti-Soviet case. As a matter of fact there is little in the latest Snow serial which did not appear in the *Saturday Evening Post* during those years in endless pro-Soviet articles under the same by-line.

But passing over the obscure motivations and strange alibis of the editors, let's look at the articles themselves. They begin, in accordance with the familiar formula, with a plea for understanding Russia which, on analysis, boils down to an attempt to promote *mis*understanding.

The title of the first article is, of course, "Why We Don't Understand Russia," and it is filled with sideswipes at those who *do* understand Russia. As we read on we discover that Mr. Snow is alarmed precisely because the American people are beginning at long last to understand what they are up against in relation to the USSR.

The war-time propaganda which pictured Stalin as the peace-loving apostle of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, and his dictatorship as a freedom-loving democracy, is beginning to wear off. Moscow's broken pledges, aggressive conduct and expansionist design are showing through the peeling layers of double-talk and Mr. Snow labors loyally to cover up the exposed spots.

He rests his case as devil's advocate largely on the claim that the misunderstandings between Stalin and his recent allies are primarily linguistic. It seems that when Stalin says white he means black; when he says "free and unfettered elections" he means coerced one-party unanimity; when he says "democracy" he means police terror and concentration camps; when he says "denazification" he means liquidation of people who refuse to knuckle under to the Soviet brand of fascism. Most of the misunderstandings would evaporate, according to Mr. Snow's thesis, if only our statesmen learned to interpret this Stalinist code.

There is some truth in this, obviously. Britain and America did play booby rôles in turning over half of Europe and the richest portions of China to Stalin's ministrations on the basis of generalized formulas which Stalin conveniently translated into his own inside-out upside-down political vocabulary. While this demonstrates the naiveté of the democracies, however, it hardly excuses the duplicity of the totalitarians. If Roosevelt and

Churchill did not understand what Stalin meant by certain words and formulas, Stalin obviously did know what Roosevelt and Churchill meant. In taking advantage of their semantic simplicity, the Soviet dictator was thus adding deliberate deceit to his expansionist schemes.

### III

Let us indulge in a parable. Suppose Mr. Ben Hibbs, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and some Al Capone agreed to "take Mr. Snow for a ride." Mr. Hibbs merely felt that his associate editor needed a change of scenery. But to "Al Capone" taking someone for a ride had a quite different connotation, and accordingly he plugged Mr. Snow and dumped him in the river. Would Mr. Hibbs, in the name of "understanding" the gangster, condone the crime on the ground of an unfortunate difference in the interpretation of words?

Yet that is substantially Mr. Snow's logic in soft-pedaling and in part condoning the Kremlin's crimes. Our quarrel with Moscow today is not about the labels which Stalin puts on his behavior but about the content of that behavior, about Soviet actions and policies *per se*. The essence of the Polish problem, for instance, is not whether what has transpired can be palmed off as "free and unfettered elections." It is whether the Poles, a loyal and heroic allied people, should be forced to live under a hateful puppet régime imposed by Russia, regardless of the verbal hocus-focus.

Having convinced us that when the Kremlin solemnly pledged white it meant black, what does Mr. Snow achieve? Does this broadminded "understanding" solve anything or remove sources of friction? Clearly it does not. On the contrary, the democratic world becomes more deeply alarmed and distressed the more accurately it grasps the real meanings of Stalin's words.

After all, Americans and other democratic allies of the Soviet régime were most optimistic and complacent precisely when they *misunderstood* Russia — when they were kidded by the Snows into accepting the Kremlin as peace-loving, non-aggressive and even democratic in roughly the Western sense of these terms. It is in the measure that such misconceptions are shaken off and the real purposes under the beguiling language of various agreements are exposed that the non-Soviet world is put on the alert.

Mr. Snow makes a great to-do about the alleged "Marxist language" in explaining Soviet violations of international morals and human decencies. Whether Marxist or plain Stalinist, the language is a deliberate device for disguising totalitarian goods with socialist and liberal labels. The confusion in the world does not derive from the Soviet semantics but the other way around — those semantics have been skillfully shaped and used to promote confusion.

There is no reason why the pig-Latin of Soviet chicanery today, any more than Nazi verbal trickery some

years ago, should be allowed to destroy our sense of right and wrong. If Mr. Snow had retained that sense, instead of going into a semantic tailspin, he would scarcely be explaining the extension of servitude to innocent populations as an unhappy linguistic error worthy of our tolerant understanding. He would acknowledge that the concealment of ugly facts under pleasant words is one of the great crimes of the totalitarian era.

In his eagerness to fabricate excuses for the inexcusable he glosses over the content of Soviet behavior and concentrates on verbal quibbles. As if the partitioning of Poland with Hitler, or the looting of Manchuria, or the gang-ing-up on Greece by Soviet satellites, or the oppression of the common people inside Russia were somehow sanctified by "Marxist" interpretations! People like Mr. Snow need only renounce their strange neutrality in the struggle between freedom and dictatorship to realize that in the age-old language of ethical values, moral preferences and human liberty there is no room for double-talk.

Definitions are directly related to the ethical systems under which they flourish. We must reject Soviet definitions precisely because we reject the view of life, government and human values from which they derive. We are under no obligation to grant the validity of definitions, whether inside or outside Stalin's domain, that rest on a renunciation of Christian ethics and democratic strivings.

Mr. Snow's psychological commit-

ment to defend the Soviets puts him in the difficult position of a lawyer saddled with the defense of a guilty client. He must use every forensic trick of exaggeration, oversimplification and false analogy and he must make a great to-do over marginal arguments which, in the case of a stronger client, could be skipped.

To illustrate the different political languages used by Russians and by us, he points to our belief that Bolshevism and fascism are both totalitarian dictatorships and the Kremlin's alleged belief that the United States is a dictatorship. But it does not occur to him to make the commonsense distinction that our belief about Bolshevism is correct and their belief about us mistaken.

"Our generals and politicians," the disingenuous Mr. Snow writes, "never assumed that any Allied agreement required us to support Communist parties in our occupied areas. Why should the Russians have assumed that the same agreements required them to support capitalist parties in theirs?"

Can anything be more neat than this casual play on the word *support*? Mr. Snow knows well enough that we have never objected to Russian failure to support "capitalist parties." All we expect and have asked is that non-Soviet parties be tolerated even as we tolerate pro-Soviet parties; that their leaders should not be terrorized and shot; that their followers should not be intimidated; that the results of elections conducted under their own Soviet supervision should not be can-

celled out by arrest and terror when they happen, as in Hungary, to go against them. By using the word *support* when he means *suppress and destroy* Mr. Snow tries to score a point for his unpleasant client.

Finding himself in difficult straits, he goes so far as to argue an analogy between the American trusteeship over a thousand square miles of uninhabited Pacific islands — islands which did not belong to Japan and were therefore subject to transfer — and the Soviet annexation of 260,000 square miles grabbed from other countries, including allies, and the forcible acquisition of 25 million new and unwilling subjects. The American action does not remotely involve the Atlantic Charter, the Soviet actions are raw and brutal violations of that Charter — but for Mr. Snow the analogy must do; he has no better.

His most reckless performance in the rôle of devil's advocate is in the article where he presumes to tell "How It Looks to Ivan Ivanovich." Having identified Ivan as the average Russian, the common man, Mr. Snow proceeds to credit him with the views and prejudices of a deeply-convinced Soviet Communist. His Ivan turns out to be 100 per cent on the party-line, echoing the official views down to the last Stalinist accent.

This assumption that the views of the average Russian coincide with those of the Kremlin is a libel on the Russian people. It imposes on them, falsely and unjustly, responsibility for the mistakes and excesses of their

totalitarian overlords. This failure to distinguish between the people of Russia and the Communist dictatorship, between Russia *per se* and the Soviet régime, is typical of special pleaders for the Kremlin.

If it were true that the Soviet rulers and ruled see eye to eye, why would millions of Soviet citizens try to avoid returning to Russia? Why would Stalin need the world's largest secret police to watch the political morals of his Ivan Ivanoviches? Why would he need concentration camps holding at least 14 million slave laborers? To palm off Mr. Snow's views and those of a typical member of the ruling Soviet minority as the convictions of a typical Russian *subject* sets a record in misrepresentation under the spurious banner of understanding Russia.

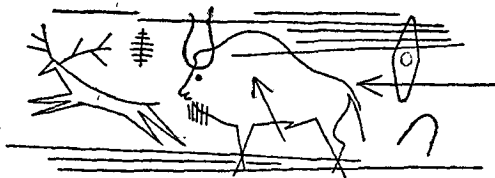
Neither Mr. Snow nor the Inter-church Committee, neither the Wallaces nor the Davieses, are interested in promoting American "understanding" of Russia. Every sign that their countrymen are getting closer to an understanding alarms them into throwing up smokescreens and artificial fogs of confusion to shield the object of their political affections. They are dedicated for their various reasons to the deepening and perpetuation of the ignorance, the myths and the half-truths spread by Communist and Soviet propaganda. The fact that some of them, certainly among the churchmen, mean well may mitigate their moral guilt, but it does not reduce the measure of the evil which they perpetrate.

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# DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE

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## THE MONSTROUS MANTIS

IT IS never safe to predict, even a few months or a few minutes in advance, what turn will be taken by the course of human events.

The world of nature, by and large, operates with a certain dependability. It is full of the expectable: the rising of the sun tomorrow at the hour calculated by the astronomers today, the month of June to be warmer than the month of January, the rate of a falling body to be identical in Hoboken or Lhasa. There are some surprises, of course, some quirks to prevent a total complacency. But on the whole, whatever the merit of Sir James Jeans' insistence that the universe most nearly resembles a great Thought, the universe largely behaves itself with the reassuring functional steadiness of a great machine.

The instant the human element is introduced, however, all calculations become of dubious value and all predictions foolhardy. Five months from now, the state of nature being undis-

turbed, we can reckon the birds will be going south. But where will the human world be going? It all depends upon that factor described by the word which Emerson is supposed to have carved, or to have wanted to carve, over the door of his study. The word is Whim. One small whimsical human child, with one small match, may set off the burning of ten counties of timber. One human chief of one principality, made cross by a cinder in his eye, may set in motion a movement that will drown a continent in the blood of armies. As long as the activity of atoms remained exclusively a function of the world of nature, we could remain confident that trees would not suddenly burst and dissolve into whorls of energy, nor mountains suddenly explode because their neutrons and protons had taken a notion to rearrange. But atoms have now become subject to the human element. They are an instrument at the disposal of our infirm and unstable will. It is now the fact that one whimsical Chief of State — hot with a moment of pique, swollen with a min-



ute's pride of mastership, or just unsettled by a hangover — may by the pushing of two or three buttons or buzzers contrive to have every man-jack of us dead by nightfall. The whole turn of human events now hangs by the spiderweb-thread of the responsibility of all individual wills.

It is an almost unendurably doomful thought. A little triviality may be an antidote.

Supposing that we are not all shrivelled to cinders in the next few months, and that the incalculable human element has not tipped the planet off its axis, are there any human activities that can fairly be counted on? All naturalists will agree that there is at least one. Between now and next autumn, there are going to be written to newspapers considerable numbers of letters all of which will say much the same thing. What they will say, with varying in phrase, will go like this:

#### TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to report the discovery in my garden this morning of a unique insect or animal, the like of which has never been seen hereabouts before and which has caused considerable excitement in this community.

The creature looks something like a huge grasshopper, but thin and elongated almost like a stick. It walks on four legs, like an animal, with its head reared high and bent as if in prayer, and it holds its arms close to its breast.

When I ventured to touch the monstrous looking creature with my rake, it turned its head and spat a quantity of dark brown venom. Then it scuttled away into the grass and disappeared.

Can any reader of your paper identify this creature? I am wondering if perhaps it may be some strange tropical species, which got here accidentally. It is certainly evil looking, and I would like to learn whether its venom is very dangerous. . . .

The appearance in the press of letters to this effect is as dependable a part of summer as ivy-poisoning and heat lightning. The season is upon us when, in scattered parts of the country, citizens will be encountering for the first time the creature known to entomologists as a praying mantis. They will be alarmed and puzzled; and they can hardly be blamed. For a praying mantis is one of the oddest little monsters in the world.

#### II

Mantids are not actually uncommon. They occur all through the southern parts of the United States, and as far north as Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Stray individuals come even farther north; and European species, introduced into central New York some time ago, have become acclimated and are multiplying. But a mantis is shaped so like a twig or a bit of vegetation, and is so concealingly colored — the females commonly a dull leaf-green, the males a dull bark-brown — that the insect is rarely noticed.

Helping it in invisibility is its stick-stiff slowness of motion, and its habit of passing very long periods without moving at all. When mantids do attract human notice, they have from the most ancient antiquity aroused

a lively dread and touched off impressive superstitions.

It was supposed in the ancient world that the mantis, bowed in perpetual prayer, was so holy a creature that it would infallibly point the way to the nearest temple. At the same time, terrifyingly, the appearance of a mantis was taken to foretell the sure imminence of famine. In China, mantids are thought to be in prayer for those about to die. In our south, the insect is called "mule-killer," and it is understood that the dark brown spittle is deadly. In eastern lands, so the notion goes, a mantis faces forever toward Mecca.

The facts of mantis-life are less eerie, but perhaps not less arresting. The dark spittle of a mantis is as harmless as a grasshopper's. The creature has no disposition, or ability, to do harm to mankind. But in its own insect-world it is as murderous a monster as it looks. Had insects any power of realization and imagination, the fellow-creatures in the mantis' world might well live haunted, as by a nightmare, by this creature that creeps so slowly, stealthily, among them. For it is an *unheimlich* beast, surely. It is the only insect that can turn its head around and peer over its shoulder. Though it does not actually have only four legs — (like all insects, it has six) — it has the queer habit of walking on only four; and this gives it an ogreish, distorted gait and posture, unnatural as the reared-up stance of the deadly snake called a mamba. The "hands" that the creeping mantis

keeps piously tucked up against its breast are actually its paired fore-legs. It holds them like that to have them in instant readiness for pouncing. The fore-legs, thus continually held at the ready, are thick, strong, and rough with spines, that nothing may slip from their grasp. The fore-legs end in hooks. As the mantis rests motionless in the undergrowth, peering this way and that at its fellow-insects, or as it creeps among them with reared neck and bowed head, it has just one design toward them. It wants to eat them.

Mantis-eggs are laid in the autumn: rows of them, all standing on end and close together, enclosed in a ribbon of mucus that the female squeezes out on a twig. The mucus quickly hardens on exposure to the air and dries into a case in which the long lines of eggs have the look of a braided thread. From each egg, in the spring, comes a little mantis, light yellow in color, which undergoes a succession of molts and achieves its own dull green or dull brown adulthood by fall. From infancy it is devoted to the preoccupation of all mantids: the catching and devouring of victims.

On its bent knees, the mantis crouches waiting. At the approach of a grasshopper or cricket, it rears its body, with fantastic slowness and caution, and almost imperceptibly tenses its flexed "arms." A moment . . . another moment . . . and then with a nearly incredible quickness the normally slow-moving creature has flung out its deadly hooks and saw-toothed "hands," has whipped the prey back

in a relentless clasp against its breast, and is already stuffing it into its chomping jaws.

Or, if insects do not come to the mantis, the mantis goes in pursuit of them. It is a chilling pursuit for an imaginative man to watch. For the mantis hunts its prey by stealth, stalking the victim as a cat does. Having sighted prey, the mantis slows its normally slow gait to a still slower kind of creeping. It raises and plants each foot with an infinite stealth. Its stiff, crooked body goes inching forward so gradually that it has to be watched carefully for motion to be seen at all. Insects do not take notice of dangers that do not move. The hunched, rigid killer, crawling near on its death-errand, is not perceived until the moment of the strike. There is only the instant when the spiny fore-legs lash out and pinion; and then the mantis' jaws are already at work.

The hunger of a mantis is enormous. A captive one has been observed to engulf a daddy-long-legs, followed by three grasshoppers in suc-

cession, and to remain so ravenous that it pounced with cannibal enthusiasm on another mantis in the cage. This cannibalism is not uncommon. Such is the predatory fury of mantids that even the females fight with one another, locking their crooked fore-legs in conflicts that end only with one contestant's death and subsequent devouring.

The monstrous rapacity of mantids extends even to that rite which is central in all creatures' life-histories: the performance of mating. When male and female mantis copulate, the event is commonly marked by a conclusion which may stand as symbol for the whole theme and quality of the lives of these unappeasable little monsters. Locked in embrace, the female is irresistibly stimulated by this closeness and availability of another body. When she has been fertilized, she does not release the grip of her spiny arms upon her mate. Hugging him tightly, dribbling her dark brown spittle, she presses herself upon him and bites off his head.



# THE STORY OF SAM PATCH

BY RICHARD M. DORSON

TO THE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF WESTERN NEW-YORK AND OF UPPER CANADA:

All I have to say is, that I arrived at the Falls too late, to give you a specimen of my Jumping Qualities, on the 6th inst.; but on Wednesday, I thought I would venture a small Leap, which I accordingly made, of Eighty Feet, merely to convince those that remained to see me, with what safety and ease I could descend, and that I was the TRUE SAM PATCH, and to show that Some Things could be Done as well as Others; which was denied before I made the Jump.

Having been thus disappointed, the owners of Goat Island have generously granted me the use of it for nothing; so that I may have a chance, from an equally generous public, to obtain some remuneration for my long journey hither, as well as affording me an opportunity of supporting the reputation I have gained, by Aero-Nautical Feats, never before attempted, either in the Old or New World.

I shall, Ladies and Gentlemen, on Saturday next, Oct. 17th, precisely at 3 o'clock, P.M. LEAP at the FALLS OF NIAGARA, from a height of 120 to 130 feet (being 40 to 50 feet higher than I leapt before), into the eddy below. On my way down from Buffalo, on the morning of that day, in the Steam-Boat Niagara, I shall, for the amusement of the Ladies, doff my coat and Spring from the Mast head into the Niagara River.

SAM PATCH

*Of Passaic Falls, New-Jersey.  
Buffalo, Oct. 12, 1829.*

SO BOASTED Sam Patch in posters distributed only a month before the leap that terminated his mortal life and ensured him a legendary existence. Few persons in the United States of the 1830s and 40s could have avoided all the poems, ballads, rhymes, anecdotes, reminiscences, tall tales and theatrical farces that celebrated this braggart jumper of history, fantasy and hoax. A century later the myth is as dead as the man, and like Mike Fink, Davy Crockett and Mose the Bowery B'hoj, Patch must be reintroduced to his present legatees.

The biographical data about Samuel Patch prior to his first public jumping exploit in 1827 is extremely slight. He spent his early years in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where he worked in Samuel Slater's cotton mill and made running jumps into the Pawtucket River from nearby roofs, thus earning the plaudits of his townsmen. Moving to Paterson, New Jersey, still a cotton-spinner, Sam eluded the constables and jumped seventy feet from the highest cliff overlooking the scenic Passaic Falls to steal the show from Timothy Crane who was then pulling the first bridge across the

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RICHARD M. DORSON teaches American history at Michigan State College. He has recently published a collection of New England folk-tales, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow*.

chasm. Exhilarated by the notoriety he received, Patch took to electrifying crowds in New Jersey and New York with descents from bridges, until Niagara Falls challenged him and provided his crowning conquest.

Apparently plans to blast off a portion of Table Rock, treacherously overhanging the chasm from the Canadian bank, suggested to Buffalo citizens the idea of securing an additional attraction. They invited the Jersey jumper to perform, and also decided to send the shallow-draught schooner *Superior* careening over the Falls. (Two years earlier the unseaworthy brig *Michigan* had floated down the rapids with an animal crew of bears, foxes, geese and a buffalo, plus an effigy of Andrew Jackson, before fascinated thousands.) Patch accepted, but as the handbill quoted above indicates, he missed the festival day, and the throngs saw a ship fall and smash, rather than a man leap and live. On the next day Sam did demonstrate his powers to a limited audience with a preliminary plunge of some seventy feet from the lower end of Goat Island. Robbed of his rightful turnout, however, Patch publicized a second and greater leap for the following week. For these exhibitions, the wooded islet splitting the cataract in an uneven half between the American and the Horseshoe Falls provided a logical springboard. Observers congregated on the island and lined the American and Canadian shores. For this second leap the platform on Goat Island stood about two thirds the ele-

vation of the 160-foot-high neighboring banks, a fearful height when scanned from the depths below.

On a rainy Saturday, Sam boldly climbed the perpendicular ladder to the scaffold, ignoring tearful farewells and protestations from persons at the foot. Before ascending, he shed his shoes and coat and tied a handkerchief about his neck. Atop the ladder, which had been built from four trees spliced together and fastened by ropes running back upon Goat Island, he mounted the narrow, reeling platform. It was barely large enough for a man to sit upon, and for ten minutes he displayed his poise and tested the stand, while the spectators repeatedly cheered. At length he rose upright, took the handkerchief from his neck, tied it about his waist, waved his hand, kissed the American flag which flew over his head, and stepped off steadfastly into the swirling flood. A general cry of "He's dead, he's lost!" swept through the crowd, according to one account; a second reports a benumbed silence, broken only by joyous congratulations when Sam's head burst out of the waters. While handkerchiefs waved and huzzas roared, the Jumping Hero swam briskly to the shore, to inform his first onrushing admirer, "There's no mistake in Sam Patch!" Unanimously the surrounding group exclaimed, "This is the real Sam Patch!" The *Buffalo Republican* commented: "The jump of Patch is the greatest feat of the kind ever effected by man. He may now challenge the universe for a competitor."

## II

Flushed with the publicity of press notices and the public excitement, Sam turned to Rochester and the Genesee Falls for a new conquest. By now the newspapers of the nation were playing up Sam enthusiastically, and his sponsors determined to provide a still greater, climactic feat, by erecting a twenty-five foot scaffold on the rock's brow to extend the jump to a distance of 125 feet. In the posters Sam announced, with unwitting irony: "HIGHER YET! SAM'S LAST JUMP. SOME THINGS CAN BE DONE AS WELL AS OTHERS. THERE IS NO MISTAKE IN SAM PATCH." Monroe and Ontario counties poured out for the November 13 leap; schooners and coaches ran excursions; betting ran high in the local bars as to the outcome; nearby roofs and windows and both banks swarmed with the curious. But when Sam walked out on the grassy, tree-covered rock that divided the greater and lesser branches of the cataract, at two P.M. (his pet bear was to jump at three), and climbed up to the platform, some spectators thought he staggered and lacked his usual aplomb. Some assert that the jumper was reeling drunk; others stoutly deny that he took more than a glass of brandy to counteract the chilly day. Sam made a brief speech: Napoleon was a great man and conquered nations, Wellington was a greater and conquered Napoleon, but neither could jump the Genesee Falls — that was

left for him to do. Then he jumped. But this time the descent lacked its usual arrowy precision. One third of the way down his body began to droop, his arms parted from his sides, he lost command of his body and struck the water obliquely with arms and legs extended. He did not reappear before the horror-stricken assemblage. Dragging for the body proved unsuccessful, perhaps because of pinioning branches on the river bed. Nor was it found until the following March 17, when a farmer broke the ice to water his horses at the mouth of the Genesee near Lake Ontario. The black kerchief was still tied about the waist. An autopsy revealed a ruptured blood vessel and dislocation of both shoulders. The body was buried in a nameless grave and lay long forgotten in the Charlotte cemetery, until it was finally identified by a board head-marker reading, "Here lies Sam Patch; such is Fame." Since the removal of the marker, controversy has arisen as to Sam's real whereabouts.

Torrents of rhetoric, moralizing, editorial comment, elegy, rumor, and speculation washed over the lifeless high jumper in a volume to match the waters of Genesee Falls. One reaction took the form of sermons: it was emphasized that vain and mortal man should not carelessly attempt, nor the curious encourage, trifling with divine Providence. "Shall we wantonly precipitate ourselves from the cataract of Niagara, trusting in God's mercy to preserve us, or plunge into

the burning crater of the mountain, vomiting forth melted lava, hoping that God will sustain us?" Other interpreters read a selfless heroism and sublime grandeur into the tragedy. But the most general note avoided both preachment and panegyric for jocose commentary, in prose and verse, which was probably more appropriate to the clownish daredevil. One editor bluntly remarked that the whole editorial corps would regret his "precipitate" loss, since he had previously supplied so many sparkling paragraphs, and it was also announced that Patch had imitated the pig who a week before had jumped the falls to his death, by "going the whole hog of the leap and forfeiture." Punning doggerel provided a spurious epitaph, with each atrocious double meaning italicized: "*divers* times, a *drop* too much, untimely *bier*, this sad *fall*." It concluded:

There's none alive will ever match him —  
Ah, cruel Death, thus to *dis*-PATCH him!

Many refused to believe that Sam had really died. Knowing his propensity for stunts, one faction accepted the surmise that Sam had previously discovered an eddy that ran under a shelving rock, where he had hidden a suit of dry clothes, a bottle of Santa Cruz, and something to eat. Following his jump he swam to the spot, remained there till dark, and then traveled eastward incognito. A man in Albany had seen and talked with him; another in Rochester bet one hundred dollars that Sam would reappear in that city before the first

of January; a notice posted prominently in Rochester stated that Patch would recount his adventures at Acker's Eagle Tavern the forenoon of December 3; reports spread that he had been sighted at Pittsford, Canandaigua, and other places on his way to New Jersey. One widely printed newspaper story, signed by "Sam Patch," declared the Genesee jump to be a capital hoax, with a man of straw and paint, sand and stones, substituting for the Jumping Hero.

Even after the finding of the body the jumper continued to be seen: there were those who at twilight perceived Sam sporting at the Falls, and repeating his fearful feat to a concourse of sea gulls and fishes.

### III

To American poets and rhymesters of the 1830s searching for native themes, the heroics, tragedy, and humors of the Last Leap proved magnetic. In a heavily humorous mock elegy Robert Sands, a New York lawyer, dabbler in letters, and classicist, compared Sam to aerialists famed in mythology — to Leander, Sappho, Icarus, Helle, Empedocles — and found his bravery, loneliness, and mother love not too inferior hero stuff. A lengthy narrative poem by Thomas Ward, a Newark doctor, made an elegant Byronic hero of "The Great Descender, mighty PATCH — Spurner of heights — great Nature's overmatch!", and unblushingly likened him to Columbus, Franklin, Newton, Galileo, and Nelson in what must be accounted an



overlooked curiosity of American literature. Humbly born Patch, "half dust, half deity," belonged to the immortal class who combined "Th' heroic body with th' inventive mind," and died a true "martyr of science."

In a protracted Shakespearean soliloquy he perceives the path to fame in a meteor's downward descent, which fires his mind with the glories in the setting sun, diving bells, parachutes, and waterfalls. Daring the challenge of the boiling Passaic, he triumphantly flings himself down the water-flooded vale, pausing only to quaff a draught of the nectar heroes ever love — whisky. In Boston a printer ran off an anonymous news-ballad on the Last Leap, with a picture of Sam careening downward. Seba Smith, who wrote the Jack Downing letters and the folksong about Fair Charlotte, felt inspired to compose a brisk ballad chronicle on the saga of Patch; in Smith's mock epic the ecstatic mob votes to change the scurvy name of Patch to "Squire Samúel O'Cataract" after his triumphant Niagara splash. One odd effusion presented a Burns-like ballad in Scottish dialect:

The cattle-show was over and past,  
Sam advertis'd to loup his last,  
Whilk gar't town bodies stand aghast,  
Whan in he jump'd  
For there were nane to cry avast!  
Whan in he plump'd.

A decade and a half later a popular jingle had distilled the essence of the tragedy.

Poor Samuel Patch, — a man once world  
renowned,

Much loved the water, and by it was  
drowned.

He sought for fame, and as he reached to  
pluck it,

He lost his ballast, and then kicked the  
buck-it.

## IV

If the versifiers mourned for Patch, the humorists promptly restored him to life and glory. Remolded by fabulists, he took on the outlines of the American mock hero. A Yankee whaler sighted the Jumping Hero in the South Seas. Amazed, he asked him, "Why, Sam, how *on airth*, did you get here? I thought you was drowned at the Canadian lines." "Why," said Sam, "I didn't get *on earth* here at all, but I came slap *through* it. In that Niagara dive I went so everlasting deep, I thought it was just as short to come up t'other side, so out I came in these parts. If I don't take the shine off the sea serpent when I get back to Boston, then my name's not Sam Patch."

A spurious autobiography, riddled with misspellings and puns, narrated sensational feats of the super-jumper for comic-annual readers. At the age of six months Sam jumped from Nanny's arms into a washtub of soap suds; as a boy he was attracted to leapfrog; in school he would always skip over hard words; before he was four-and-a-half feet tall he jumped from the masthead of a piragua into Hell Gate; at Niagara he bobbed about in the froth like a huckleberry on top of a pail of fermented beer. Since Sam, like Davy Crockett, could

not write after his demise, an editor supplied the concluding paragraph and the moral, "Look before you leap." The nation's youth learned about the illustrious aerialist in a brightly illustrated nursery book, *The Wonderful Leaps of Sam Patch*, tracing the saga in rhyme from precocious springs to adult transatlantic leaps between Washington and London.

In 1836 an aspiring comedian, already known for his Yankee rôles, portrayed Sam Patch in Buffalo, and found himself heir to the fame bestowed on the original. In western cities, and then in New York and Boston, Dan Marble exhibited *Sam Patch, or The Daring Yankee*, and its sequel, *Sam Patch in France, or The Pesky Snake*, year after year before enthusiastic audiences. After various Yankee capers, involving a courtship, an encounter with Mrs. Trollope and a discussion of Steam Doctors, the stage Patch leaped tremendously over Niagara Falls, from a height estimated at between forty and seventy feet, to bob up triumphantly in a pool of spray and foam. The bills proudly announced, "Mr. Marble will leap from the extreme height of the Theatre, a feat never attempted by any one but himself, and prove that '*Cold Water won't drown love.*'" An open trap behind the water set, containing a spring bed piled with bags of shavings, caught Marble when he jumped from the flies, a performance that frequently cost him minor bruises and at least once a serious injury. On one

occasion a substitute was obliged to jump. The victim fortified himself as Patch had before the Last Leap, with almost identical consequences, for he came down fast and lopsidedly and broke his leg. The jumping mania affected the audiences. Clerks jumped counters, farmers jumped fences, boys and old folks vied in "doing" Sam Patch. Marble and his fellow-actors, Addams, McVicker and "Yankee" Locke, presented a Yankee roarer to American audiences already conditioned to stage Jonathans and half-alligator heroes.

In its fruition, the Patch legend was taken note of by the literary great, and provided the masses with a proverbial reference. Nathaniel Hawthorne, always receptive to somber American traditions, stirred eagerly to this one on viewing the Genesee Falls in the dusk, and immediately extracted its implications for one of his tales. "How stern a moral may be drawn from the story of poor Sam Patch! . . . Was the leaper of cataracts more mad or foolish than other men who throw away life, or misspend it in pursuit of empty fame, and seldom so triumphantly as he?" He knew, too, of the superstition that Sam still lived. But the projected tale, so surely framed in his mind and so easily visualized by the reader, remained a synopsis.

In a novel with a good deal of factual description of western New York, William Dean Howells revealed a close familiarity with the legend, and caused one of his characters to be

shocked at a wife's ignorance of Patch: "Isabel, your ignorance of all that an American woman should be proud of distresses me." On the level of popular allusion, "Sam Patch" gained household currency, like "Sam Hill": "Afore you could say *Sam Patch*"; "Why did you play *Sam Patch*, and jump into the river?" In 1891 a Senator from Vermont illustrated his point on the floor of Congress by quoting the overeager Patch.

Although the eccentric adventurer had disappeared from the national purview by mid-century, he retained,

in local histories and feature articles, a traditional prestige in communities with special claims to him — Pawtucket, Paterson and, most faithfully, Rochester, which accorded him a float in its jubilee pageant. On the centennial of the Last Leap, the public-minded, recalling that "George Eastman's town" had once been "Sam Patch's town," proposed christening a park for the hero, to be dominated by a bronze effigy of Sam diving. Since Sam always jumped rather than dove, the nonfulfillment of this suggestion may be approved.

## SONG FOR AN OUTDOOR DANCE

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

Heaven is bright  
By day and night.  
But the fierce turmoil of noon  
Is God's sweetest boon.

The sun is eternity's bell  
And the moon its echo.  
The soft wind on the flowers  
Is angels' speech.

Hope has no measure  
And love no conditions.  
All is sacred.

Whirl and leap high,  
Time and space and all  
Warm, proud things!  
Heaven is ever bright  
By day and night.

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### DISSENTING OPINION ON TOYNBEE

by **BERTRAM D. WOLFE**

LIKE rumors of a new-found civilization, the name of Toynbee has been bobbing up in historico-philosophical writing with ever-increasing frequency. In 1934 the first three volumes of his *Study of History* were published in this country, and in 1940 three more. After an interruption for wartime service, he is now at work upon the final three volumes of a study that has apparently been massively conceived and fully planned from the outset. The aim is as large as the scope: an empirical-interpretive examination of all known civilizations, living and dead, to discover their natures, the laws of their birth, growth, decline and death, to reveal their meaning, if meaning there be that outlasts their rise and fall, and to wrest from them answers to the unresolved questions of our own time.

In this age of one-sided specialization, the audacity of the effort is enough to compel our admiration. Mr. Toynbee enumerates and examines in some measure 26 civilizations,

including in that number five arrested civilizations and ignoring abortive civilizations. . . . Of these twenty-six, no less than sixteen are dead and buried. The ten survivors are our own Western Society, the main body of Orthodox Christendom in the Near East, its offshoot in Russia, the Islamic Society, the Hindu Society, the main body of the Far Eastern Society in China, its offshoot in Japan, the three arrested civilizations of the Polynesians, the Eskimos and the Nomads.

He moves confidently among the ruins of Aztec, Inca and Maya, Sumeric, Babylonian, Indic, Sinic, Egyptian, Syriac, Minoan and other vanished or moribund civilizations, drawing even on Eskimos, Polynesians and Desert Nomads in support of some of his conclusions. Of the "ten survivors," he finds that the Polynesians and Nomads are in their

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**BERTRAM D. WOLFE** is a regular contributor to *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* and many other magazines. He is at present engaged in writing a history of the Russian Revolution in the form of a "triple biography" of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin.

last agonies; that seven out of the remaining eight are in the throes of assimilation by Western civilization; that one, the Eskimo, was arrested in its infancy; and that the remaining six "bear marks of having already broken down and gone into disintegration." That leaves only one civilization, our own, concerning which this judge, still tentative and troubled, withholds his verdict. For that he has three more volumes.

Yet innumerable obiter dicta suggest that he finds our civilization at, or just over, the crucial divide, standing in mortal danger of losing its soul, but worthy of being placed on probation and given a little more time to repent and be saved. No wonder that many, in our time of uncertainty and peril — or, in Toynbee's phrase, our "time of troubles" — are anxiously awaiting the pronouncement of the final judgment.

## II

The present one-volume abridgment of the *Study of History* [\$5.00, Oxford] is a remarkable achievement in its own right, and comes as a boon to those who might not be able to afford the time or cost of the six-volume work so far published, or who might lose themselves in the maze of innumerable illustrations, often from generally unknown fields, of every proposition advanced. The condensation is by D. C. Somervell, a fellow historian and, it would appear from this labor of love, a devoted disciple. "I made this abridgment," writes

Mr. Somervell, "for my own amusement, without Mr. Toynbee's knowledge and without any idea of publication." But Mr. Toynbee, who had long been pressed with demands for an abridgment, was delighted with the result. His original argument is presented almost entirely in his own words, and in a manner which preserves method, atmosphere, texture and proportions. Moreover, and this is most remarkable, the felicity of style and the likable qualities of the author's personality are undiminished.

Even in condensation, one cannot but be struck by the amazing wealth of illustration from such varied and often recondite fields. Mr. Toynbee, who is Director of Studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Research Professor of International History, seems to be a whole institute of historical studies in his single person. He acts at home in places where most historians scarcely dare to tread. "What, for example, was the effect of the *Clades Alliensis* upon the fortunes of Rome? . . . What the effect on the fortunes of the Osmanlis when Timur Lenk took Bayezid Yilderim captive on the field of Angora? . . . How were the Apostles affected by the abrupt withdrawal of their Master's presence so soon after it had appeared to be miraculously restored?" Why did the golden age of the Danubian monarchy coincide with the apogee of the Ottoman Empire and why did the former share the latter's fate in the moment of decline? How much pressure stimu-

lates a civilization to grow? How much is so much that the growth stiffens into catalepsy? And how much is too much, so that the civilization succumbs? All these questions are taken at random from within a few pages of one another. Any specialist may challenge, indeed many will challenge, both facts and conclusions in particular fields, but who save a Spengler or a Hegel would venture thus to embrace the whole human spectacle? The grandeur as well as the manageability of this great mass of materials comes from the fact that Toynbee is interested in no lesser events than the rise and fall of civilizations: "What we propose is to do for civilized societies something of what anthropology is doing for the primitive species."

### III

The "intelligible units of historical study" for Toynbee are not periods or separate nations, but societies or civilizations. Such civilizations issue suddenly by mutation out of primitive societies, or they issue by contact or descent out of earlier civilized societies. But all such civilizations are comparatively recent phenomena in human history, the earliest having originated no more than six thousand years ago. Thus, they are so nearly contemporaneous with one another, differ so strongly from primitive societies, and have so many things in common, that Mr. Toynbee proposes to treat them as "philosophically contemporaneous members of a single

species" in order to extract their common features and deduce some general laws concerning their birth, the process of their growth, breakdown and disintegration.

Following an extremely inadequate concept of Bergson's, our author distinguishes civilizations from primitive societies by selecting as differential the fact that primitive societies are static and "caked in custom" and look backward towards great leaders of the past or towards the old men of the group as the repositories of unchanging wisdom, while civilized societies are dynamic, tending to follow creative personalities in their midst. "A society can be called a civilization as soon as these acts of initiative (by creative leaders) and this attitude of docility are both found together." Toynbee seems a little uneasy when he first advances this criterion of Bergson's. He realizes that primitive societies, too, must originally have been dynamically progressive, indeed, must have made greater advances in the rise of "subman to man" than any advanced civilization has yet achieved. Actually, here and elsewhere Toynbee swallows Bergsonian metaphysical distinctions without adequate empirical test. The "basic distinction" is taken from degenerate, pseudo-primitive societies "as we know them" in their last agonies or petrefactions. Indeed, Toynbee himself finds in the course of his "Study" that civilizations in their last agonies may also look backward and become "caked in custom."

However, he needs Bergson's suggestive if inadequate criterion for his purposes, and so, after a few hasty reservations, he moves on as if it were adequate and fully proved. But we soon forget the fatal flaw in the foundation as we watch the magnificent edifice he proceeds to construct upon it.

Why do civilizations arise, is Toynbee's next question, and how do they grow? He finds the answer in life's way of presenting man with perpetually new challenges: a change in environment, a blow from without, a crushing defeat, a constant pressure, a serious privation. Sometimes a group fails to meet the challenge, is checked, stiffens, perhaps is overwhelmed and swept away. Sometimes, however, its élite, or a creative leader, devises an adequate response, gets it accepted, and growth begins. Such are the "virtues of adversity" that without a challenge there is no growth. But such the perils that too much challenge or inadequate response spells stagnation or death. Nor is success itself more than momentary. Each such successful response has its perils. The devices used by the creative leader to get his response accepted are themselves perilous. Success, too, goes to the head and causes idolization of a given person, institution or technique. At the same time, life continues to present new challenges. Even the successful responses themselves give rise to new challenges, to which there must be devised new responses. Thus growth itself is an

endless and endlessly hazardous chain of challenge-and-response, until an expanding civilization fails to meet a new test adequately. Then growth is arrested and breakdown begins.

Mr. Toynbee is no mechanical determinist. Neither growth nor breakdown is entirely inevitable, though he ascribes more inevitability to breakdown, once it has begun, than to growth. All life is an "ordeal" but the human spirit is endowed with sufficient spontaneity, inventiveness and freedom to meet the ordeal, when it is not too severe, in ways which occasion the growth of the spirit. There are endless perils in being born to civilization, and endless perils inherent in the processes of growth themselves. These act as brakes on growth but as accelerators on breakdown.

However, society is no biological organism, fated by irreversible physico-chemical-biological reactions to inevitable senescence and death. With each new challenge, the ordeal is renewed afresh and the fate of society is once more in the unskilled yet potentially creative hands of the individuals composing it. Mr. Toynbee moves uneasily in this open field of free indeterminacy. The ordeal is continuous, the chances of meeting it adequately are less so. Again and again, he relapses into an unconscious "Calvinism" with the assumption that a given step is fatal, so that, once taken, it causes a society to pass its apogee, whereafter it can only hope to achieve minor rallies, prolonged pe-



trefactions and static epilogues. Probably this is not so much inherent in his metaphysical theories as in the fact that he is considering mostly civilizations that have broken down or perished. Moreover, he tends to place breakdown very early, at a time when most historians have seen a "Golden Age." Thus, having placed Roman society as a mere sub-phase of the Hellenic civilization, the Roman Empire itself becomes but a phase of the Hellenic world's decay, an Empire "already doomed before it was established because the establishment of this universal state was nothing but a rally which could delay but not permanently arrest the already irretrievable ruin of the Hellenic Society." Similarly, the Chinese civilization had its "time of troubles" (the first sign of breakdown or end of growth) in the two and one-half centuries following the death of Confucius in 479 B.C., its rally in a universal state (a rally occurring, according to Toynbee's scheme, only as a phase of breakdown) in 221 B.C., its *Voelkerwanderung* or barbarian incursions in 300 A.D. Viewed in the perspective of this schema, it seems like a mere afterthought to note that the Sinic civilization is with us yet! When Toynbee does note it, it is but to observe that China has virtually succumbed to Western civilization. It does not occur to him to question whether China may not be borrowing some of our perilous technology in order to defend its own Sinic soul against our incursions.

## IV

Indeed, this brings us to a second fatal flaw in the foundations of the Toynbeeian edifice: his attitude of misprision, not to say contempt, for technology and economy, the productive processes by which man masters nature and thereby alters his own nature. We get an early hint of this in his reduction of beneficial technical progress to a single one of its forms: "etherialization." Again his "proof" is to quote a bit of dubious metaphysics, this time from Gerald Heard:

We are leaving the ground, we are getting out of touch, our tracks grow fainter. Flint lasts forever, copper for a civilization, iron for generations, steel for a lifetime. Who will be able to map the route of the London-Peking air express when the Age of Movement is over, or today to say what is the path through the ether of the messages which are radiated and received?

And suppose Mr. Toynbee had asked Heard about buildings of concrete? About the rope bridges of the Incas and the steel bridges over the East River? Whether iron is really more durable than stainless steel? To "say what was the path through the air" of the smoke messages of the ancient savage? To compare the number of durable buildings and underground structures in a modern city with a Mayan temple group surrounded only by long-vanished huts of twigs and grass? But Mr. Toynbee has need of Heard's "etherialization," as we shall see, to soar above the common concerns of pro-

ducing and reproducing the conditions of life and mastering the environment, both natural and social, as he has need to discount man's mastery of nature as a criterion of his humanization (a mastery, by the way, which contains the great secret of his growth from sub-human to human).

Progress, according to Toynbee, is the achievement of creative individuals. Their creative inventions he finds to be invariably the product of a process of "withdrawal-and-return," withdrawal for the purposes of contemplation, reflection and personal enlightenment or transformation, and then return for the purposes of enlightening their fellow men. It is instructive that Toynbee does not make this merely one of the processes of creative growth but the exclusive process, and that he illustrates it from parables of Plato and Paul, from the life of Christ, from the lives of Benedict, Gregory, the Buddha, Mohammed, and the exiled Machiavelli and Dante.

Since all growth originates with individuals and at best is readily communicated only to small creative minorities, the problem is how to convert the rest of society, the mass of men who remain forever essentially on the level of "the primitive." Theoretically, this may be done by a process of saintly contagion or direct sharing of the withdrawal experience, but few indeed are those capable of becoming disciples. Generally and on a mass scale, these few, *i.e.* this

creative minority, must employ "mimesis" or "drill," a procedure which communicates only the externals. And mimesis or drill, being mechanical, contains a fearful peril to the soul of a civilization, easily corrupting those who employ it as well as those upon whom it is exercised. Once more the processes of growth are pregnant with the perils of decay. Moreover, it now becomes clear why Mr. Toynbee is as neglectful of political techniques and the hopes and promises of democracy as he is of scientific techniques. At bottom, they too are "mechanical."

## v

Thus, for three reasons, Toynbee is more deeply and extensively preoccupied with breakdown than with growth: first, because the civilizations he deals with (all but one) are either dead or dying; second, because the very tests he gives of breakdown suggest, somewhat hesitantly, that our own civilization has already climbed over the great divide; and third, and emotionally most important, because his inquiry is intended to culminate with a demonstration that civilizations do not always perish utterly but often bequeath to their successors something exempt from the process of decay. That something is not to be confused with the "cumulative heritage" which is the hope of those who believe in the possibility of earthly progress. Nor does it come from the high tide of any earlier civilization. No, it is a product of the period of decline itself. Though that

"something" has appeared in inferior form during the decline of other civilizations, it has reached its highest possible form only in the decline of the "Hellenic" and "Syriac" civilizations, which, while dying, begot and bequeathed to our own, something which is the author's most cherished possession and which provides the basic metaphysical framework of his historical investigation. But let us not run ahead, for Mr. Toynbee not only uses the fourth, fifth and sixth volumes (from page 244 on in the condensed version) to outline this conception, but he has three more volumes in which to develop it fully.

## VI

While growth has about it a sort of lawless and unexpected spontaneity of invention and leads to infinite variety in solutions and civilizations, Toynbee finds that disintegration has about it a compelling trend to regularity and uniformity, to lawfulness. "As differentiation is the mark of growth, so standardization is the mark of disintegration." Creative individuals still exist, but their ability to solve their problems in and through society seems to diminish. Now they either seek to escape from an intolerable present by imaginary solutions, or they seek to save their own souls (withdrawal without return), or they devise mere "mechanical" solutions — devices of law and administration or "universal states" — which serve merely to retard and mitigate the processes of disintegration. In place of

creativity comes "abandon" or the rigid self-control of stoicism; in place of the vital élan which accompanies growth, there develops the "sense of drift" and the "sense of sin," or that disguised form of drift, inexorable determinism. In lieu of truly creative solutions come time-arresting or time-vaulting utopias, dreams of an impossible return to the golden age of the past ("archaism"), or an impossible leap into a golden age of the future ("futurism").

All of these devices are but eddies in the downward course of the stream of doom — that is, all but one! True, archaism may be spiritualized into the expedient of "detachment," a withdrawal into the fortress of the soul, an abandonment of the world. But this gives us naught beyond the feeble consolations of philosophy. (Significantly, Toynbee never uses the term philosophy in any other sense!) Futurism, however, contains within itself the possibility of its own "transcendence" for it may be spiritualized into a hope for the coming of God's kingdom on earth, thereby becoming that action of the soul which produces "the higher religions." The "logical conclusion" of the detachment of philosophy is suicide, or, in religious form, *karma*. But the logical conclusion of the "transfiguration" of futurism is . . . the Christian religion, which proclaims a God who has voluntarily abandoned a detachment which it was clearly within His power to enjoy and has instead submitted to man's fate

and, in its most anguished form, to man's agony, for "God so loved the World. . . ."

## VII

In a revealing personal statement, cited on the jacket, Mr. Toynbee writes: "I see things from the point of view of an Ancient Historian, looking at the modern Western World from the outside." One feels the aptness of this remark in little things and in big: in his casual rejection of modern art as mere "promiscuity" (he cannot conceive of "borrowing" without losing one's own soul); in his virtual writing off of the Orient as having begun to commit suicide by accepting certain Western techniques; in his rejection of the gradual secularization of knowledge since the Enlightenment and of the modern basis of toleration ("this attitude of mind which sterilized fanaticism at the cost of extinguishing faith has lasted from the seventeenth century into the twentieth and . . . is beginning at last to be recognized for what it is . . . the supreme danger to the spiritual health and even to the material existence of the Western body social"); in his pronouncement of secular humanism ("that modern Western process of evicting God to make room for Law") as something which "may be written off as exceptional or even pathological" — and we might multiply indefinitely the instances.

The Russian intelligentsia are to him a species of intellectual "Quis-

lings" — the word is Somervell's in a footnote! — because they sought to borrow from the West. He comes to this conclusion not merely because he rejects the possibility of real borrowing without loss of soul, but because he has simply overlooked the fact that along with the Westernizers there were the Slavophiles. In general, a "treason" is ascribed to all modern intellectuals, following Benda, but it began "centuries earlier, when the 'clerks' repudiated their clerical origin by trying to shift the rising edifice of our Western Christian Civilization from a religious to a secular basis." Hence, we are not surprised when, in another connection, he compares all Western religions for the measure of their comparative vitality, and finds that "unquestionably Catholicism is the most vigorous . . . and in the Church of England, we should unhesitatingly assign the palm of superior vitality to the Anglo-Catholic variety of Anglicism. . . ."

It is useless for the various specialists to criticize his applications of his formulae to their special fields, for it becomes clear in Volumes IV, V and VI that his "empirical method" of studying history is only a pretense, an unconscious tribute to the secular, rational scientific method which at heart he rejects. As early as page 223 (of the abridged version) we find him forgetting his recognition of the plurality and diversity of growth to speak of "the goal of human endeavor." By page 243 this becomes:

The several climbers (*i.e.* civilizations) are

all engaged in an identical enterprise . . . the same goal . . . The underlying unity is apparent . . . The seeds sown are separate seeds, and each seed has its own destiny . . . Yet they are all sown by one Sower in the hope of obtaining one harvest.

On page 417 he discovers "the *anima naturaliter Christiana* in the bosom of primitive man." On page 433 he finds that revolution is a species of Satanism working against the cosmic order. Next he finds that "mankind cannot exist without an Orthodoxy," without a personal God, who must be a jealous God to win out. By page 524, his "empirical study of history" has either been forgotten or has so far confirmed him in his belief that "we" (the editorial we) may . . .

allow ourselves to hold that this spiritual reorientation was a discovery of the One True God, and that a human make-believe about the future of This World had given place to a divine revelation of an Other World. . . . It remains for us to note some of the principal stages in the accomplishment of this immense feat of spiritual reorientation. Its essence is that a mundane scene which was once looked on as a stage for human actors, with or without superhuman backers, is now regarded as a field for the progressive realization of the Kingdom of God.

It is not my intent to challenge this beautifully phrased, deeply held and manifestly comforting belief. All I wish to assert is that a careful reading of this *Study of History* reveals that it is not, as it professes to be, an

empirical study at all, and that, essentially — without the charms of style and the amazing counterpoint of erudition — one could make Dr. Toynbee's findings by first setting down his prior version of the Christian creed and then weaving in and out through the pluriverse of history in quest of applications, illustrations, and confirmations.

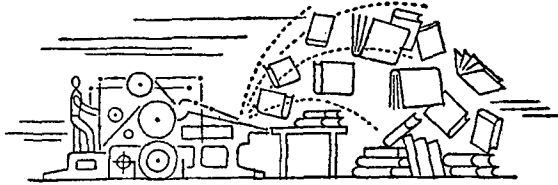
Nor do I wish to warn the reader away from what is really a masterpiece of Christian historical apologetics and exegesis. Quite the contrary, it is a richly rewarding book, nobly and grandly conceived, challengingly and beautifully presented. For those who do not know that growth is a constantly new response to a constantly new ordeal, uncertain and fraught with its own perils, there is many a keen home thrust and thought-provoking lesson.

The more history the reader knows, the more challenges to thought and question he will find on every page of this book. For what Mr. Toynbee has written is perhaps the most engaging, and certainly the most erudite Christian interpretation of history that has ever been written. My only wonder is that those who have universally acclaimed it have not been more aware of that fact, or at least more specific in pointing it out and more sensitive to the manifold errors of selection, and interpretation which spring from the theological bias of Dr. Toynbee's *Study of History*.

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# THE CHECK LIST

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## HISTORY

**COLUMBIA: COLOSSUS ON THE HUDSON**, by Horace Coon. \$4.50. *Dutton*. This is the first volume in the American College and University Series of studies of leading American institutions of higher learning. It is a comprehensive work, but it is carelessly written and deficient in research. In the chapter on the achievements of Nicholas Murray Butler, Mr. Coon praises him and slambangs him almost in a *New York Daily News* manner; in one place he says that Dr. Butler was in the habit of "sounding off each June on every subject that interested him." Mr. Coon takes up the charge of discrimination in accepting Jews, Catholics and Negroes for admission to the Columbia School of Medicine (the College of Physicians and Surgeons) and disposes of it thus: "This charge is exceedingly hard to prove, even though a great many people are convinced that it is valid. The fact is that Christians as well as Jews find it very difficult to gain admittance." The fact is that a little research — reading the articles on discrimination in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* and the report of the New York City Council Investigating Committee — would have shown Mr. Coon that the charge is fairly easy to prove. The Columbia authorities, of course, deny discrimination, but the record casts grave doubt upon their veracity. It is hoped that the succeeding volumes in the American College and University Series will be abler jobs than this one.

**WARTIME CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND POPE PIUS XII.** \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Myron C. Taylor, who contributes a long introduction to this volume, as well as running explanatory notes,

was President Roosevelt's personal representative to the Vatican from February 1940 to the President's death in April 1945. He was the chief instrument of communication between the two men, and knows the background of every piece of correspondence between them. The volume, as a whole, reveals very little, though it will doubtless be examined by future students and may furnish a few footnotes for future histories of the period. The Pope was for peace and religious freedom, while President Roosevelt tried to reassure him that the Allies, including Russia, were also for peace and religious freedom. In his letter of September 3, 1941 President Roosevelt made this strange observation: "In my opinion, the fact is that Russia is governed by a dictatorship, as rigid in its manner of being as is the dictatorship of Germany. I believe, however, that this Russian dictatorship is less dangerous to the safety of other nations than is the German form of dictatorship." There is a preface by President Truman.

## BIOGRAPHY

**GEORGE ADE, Warmhearted Satirist**, by Fred C. Kelly. \$3.50. *Bobbs-Merrill*. Ade presents a strange phenomenon in American literature. The academicians and "respectable" critics, like Brander Matthews and William Dean Howells and H. L. Mencken, instantly saw his fine quality and spread the good news far and wide, but the younger critics, especially those of a sociological and Marxist turn of mind, have sneered at him. Since the latter have made so much noise lately, Ade's work is in some disrepute as being thin stuff. But it is certain that his true worth will soon again be appreciated, and that he will join

the company of Mark Twain and Hawthorne and Melville, with whom he rightly belongs. In this informal but very good biography, Fred Kelly, quotes generously from *Fables in Slang* and other Ade works. One hopes that the book will revive interest in one of the glories of our literary history.

**LIFE AND THE DREAM**, by Mary Colum. \$3.50. *Doubleday*. Mrs. Colum has apparently known every writing Irishman in Europe and America, and she has been present, first as a silent spectator and later as a very active participant, at innumerable literary meetings and battles. For the most part, her book is very readable, for she is a shrewd observer and she knows how to use the snappy phrase. Her sections on Joyce, Yeats, and Æ are first-rate. Unfortunately, not all of the book is of the quality of these. The section on Elinor Wylie is marred by an amazing critical softness, and that on the late Hendrik Van Loon is unfair and superficial. There was a good deal more than occasional rudeness and brashness about Van Loon; he put in some very good licks for decent ideas and causes, and if he was muddled at times, his muddled-headedness was guided by a kindly heart. He would have been horrified to read this sentence in Mrs. Colum's book: "I've never been able to get the hang of what wars are about anyway."

**THERE WAS ONCE A SLAVE**, *The Heroic Story of Frederic Douglass*, by Shirley Graham. \$3.00. *Messner*. This book was given the Julian Messner Award for the Best Book Combating Intolerance in America. One is at a loss to understand why. It is a fictional biography dripping with bathos, tawdry imagination, and atrocious writing. When Captain Auld came upon the slave Frederick, he exclaimed, according to the omniscient Mrs. Graham, "Sly and dangerous!" His voice was "hard." Immediately he added, "Got to be broken now while he's young." Mrs. Graham also knows what Frederick did. He "lifted his head. His broad, smooth face turned to his master. His eyes were eloquent. Why? But his lips did not move." Further in the book Mrs. Graham practices her omniscience on Lincoln: "A few days later came Appomattox; and Lincoln, his face flushed, his eyes bright, his strength

renewed by secret wells of energy, covered his desk with plans for reconstruction. Not a day to lose, not a moment."

**MY AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE**, by Stoyan Christowe. \$2.50. *Little, Brown*. This is a lyrical account of an immigrant Macedonian boy's first five years in the United States. He worked in a railroad yard in St. Louis; defied his father by setting out to become an American, thus shattering his parent's dream of returning to the old country; became a busboy in a restaurant so that he would have time to study; and to see America he took a job with a rail-laying gang. It is an authentic immigrant story, notable especially for the affection with which Mr. Christowe recalls the "Sports," who sought to become real if gaudy sporting-type Americans, and the "Pharisees," who worked and saved only to return to Macedonia some day. Only one episode fails of conviction: this has to do with the boy's joining by accident in a mass Negro baptism in the Mississippi.

## CRITICISM

**KEATS AND THE DÆMONIC KING**, by Werner William Beyer. \$4.00. *Oxford*. This is chiefly an examination of "the literary and biographical background, the genesis, and the meaning of *Endymion*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Lamia*, and various other poems." Dr. Beyer, who is assistant professor of English at Rutgers, thinks that a major inspiration for these poems was C. M. Wieland's *Oberon*, a work that Keats read "again and again, with increasingly momentous results." Wieland was an eighteenth-century German writer of considerable popularity. This book is primarily for scholars and serious literary critics.

**LET ME LIE**, by James Branch Cabell. \$3.75. *Farrar, Straus*. Mr. Cabell persists in parodying himself. His latest book is a collection of pieces dealing with Virginian themes; in his own subtitle, *Being in the Main an Ethnological Account of the Remarkable Commonwealth of Virginia and the Making of Its History*. It appears that much of the material included first saw print a good many years ago, but the complete affectation and preciosity of manner seem certainly to belong to the



more recent Cabell vein. The one exception is Mr. Cabell's warm and discerning essay on his friend and fellow Virginian novelist, Ellen Glasgow.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**WHY THEY BEHAVE LIKE RUSSIANS**, by John Fischer. \$2.75. *Harper*. Mr. Fischer's thesis is that the Soviet Union leads from fear and weakness, not from ambition and strength. The bulk of his material is based on a two-month's stay in the USSR in the spring of 1946, reinforced by experience in dealing with Russians while on the staff of the Board of Economic Warfare. His account of life in Russia is none the less substantial for being extremely readable. His picture of the political realities of Russia accords with most recent accounts, save that he emphasizes what he found to be a wide general acceptance of the régime on the part of the people. The Politburo does not want war, at least not any time soon, Mr. Fischer believes, but it is so obsessed with the fear of attack by the United States that it is sacrificing everything internally to build up heavy war industry, and externally to build a complete safety belt of satellite states. The broad lines of the policy he advocates for the United States fit in with the Truman Doctrine.

**RUSSIA: MENACE OR PROMISE**, by Vera Micheles Dean. \$2.00. *Holt*. Although Mrs. Dean nowhere ventures an explicit answer to the fascinating question raised in the title of this book, the perceptive reader will readily see that she does *not* regard the Soviet Union as a "menace" — or at least she feels that it would not be a menace if we would only learn to treat it with the proper measure of humility, consideration and tact. She concludes with the reassuring statement that we can expect the USSR to be, "in its own way," a leader in international cooperation.

**AUSTRALIA, Its Resources and Development**, edited by G. L. Wood. \$4.00. *Macmillan*. This volume provides a vast amount of statistical information about Australian society and resources, though not much about Australian politics. The American layman may be interested to know that the continent has a population less than New

York City's, that three quarters of it is uninhabitable, and that it is usually misleading to lump Australia and New Zealand together (the latter has a much higher standard of living). On the whole, however, the book was intended mainly for specialists.

**GERMANY'S UNDERGROUND**, by Allen Welsh Dulles. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. The July 20, 1944 attempt on Hitler's life was not a last-minute effort by a small army clique to rid itself of a losing leader; it was the culmination of plotting over a number of years by a German underground. The anti-Nazis in Germany were, of course, tragically ineffective, but they included in their number representatives of many German groups: the labor movement, big business, the aristocracy, the churches and the armed forces. Much of the opposition was perhaps based fundamentally on nothing more enlightened than German nationalism, but there existed among certain prominent members a strong conviction of the rightness of the principles of Western civilization which Hitler warred against. Mr. Dulles, as head of OSS in Switzerland during the war, maintained a precarious Allied contact with the plotters against Hitler. He tells the complicated story lucidly and, though he does not fail to give it its full dramatic value, extracts from it such information as it throws on the German problem today. The book is particularly valuable in demonstrating in exact detail the probably insuperable difficulties of maintaining an effective underground in one's own country if that is not merely a dictatorship but an efficiently organized police state.

**BEHIND THE SILKEN CURTAIN**, by Bartley C. Crum. \$3.00. *Simon & Schuster*. This is a behind-the-scenes account of the deliberations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, one of the most futile steps in the long line of British attempts to muddle through on Palestine. Inside the Committee a British-American split developed, preservation of the Empire in the traditional sense underlying the arguments of the former, humanitarianism and a desire to see things done motivating the latter — but some Englishmen and some Americans were, so to speak, on the other side of the fence. Mr. Crum

became deeply convinced of the justice of the Zionist case for Palestine, and his book is a righteous denunciation of what he found to be duplicity on the part of our State Department and the British Foreign Office.

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

**THIS IS MY STORY**, by Louis Francis Budenz. \$3.00. *Whittlesey House*. About a year and a half ago Mr. Budenz resigned as managing editor of the *Daily Worker*, the chief Communist organ in America, and joined the Catholic Church, which had previously excommunicated him. Here he attempts to tell why he switched. He calls his book "a history of ideas, not primarily of personal episodes"; hence it does not reveal much that has not been known before. His philosophy now is that "the Communist movement in this country, the agent of a foreign power, is committed to the maiming of the American nation and the atomization of the American people." From a personal point of view, he reveals almost as little as from a political point of view; whatever conflict he went through is pretty much hidden, and the whole volume is stuffed with affirmations of his newly-found religiosity.

**THE WAR REPORTS OF GENERAL MARSHALL, GENERAL ARNOLD, AND ADMIRAL KING**. \$7.50. *Lippincott*. This book contains substantially the complete texts of the nine major reports of the heads of the three branches of our armed forces. Altogether they form the best one-volume official account of American preparations for and conduct of World War II. There are three valuable appendices, a chronology, and a very detailed index. There are, of course, many maps, photographs and other illustrations throughout the text.

## FICTION

**THE TWO WORLDS OF JOHNNY TRURO**, by George Sklar. \$2.75. *Little, Brown*. Johnny Truro, a seventeen-year-old high school boy, falls in love with Helen Roberts, the thirty-one-year-old wife of a soldier, who is somewhere in the outlands fighting the enemy. Helen is doing her part for victory by working in a war plant. Naturally lonely, she is given a lift by the boy's

companionship, but her husband suddenly returns — just before Christmas. Destiny spares him from learning about her two-timing by having him killed in a plane crash. For the sake of Johnny's future, Helen leaves town to live with relatives. The author of this story is an experienced screenwriter, though this is his first novel. As such it is probably no worse than the average.

**IN A YELLOW WOOD**, by Gore Vidal. \$2.75. *Dutton*. This is the story of Robert Holton, an ex-soldier confronted with the task of adjusting himself to civilian routine. We observe him in the morning as he makes ready for his daily clerical chores in a Wall Street brokerage office. We follow him down the elevator into the subway, watch him eat breakfast, and finally come with him into the office itself. Holton is not an ordinary fellow: he knows important people — at least he has an invitation to a cocktail party from a socialite who knew his mother and who, incidentally, is an acquaintance of one of his employers. At the party the employer is properly impressed by his employee. Though the action of this story is confined to 24 hours, this is a crucial period in Robert's life. Should he settle down to a solid, substantial career in the world of finance? Or should he go off on a romantic jaunt to Europe with an old but now-married flame? The story reads interestingly enough, but it is hardly more than average stuff.

**IN THIS THY DAY**, by Michael McLaverty. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Mary Devlin and Ned Mason, two young people living in a little Irish hamlet, have been dreaming of marriage for over two years. But family troubles interfere. Under the yoke of his widowed mother, a hard-hearted, self-willed woman, who sees no good at all in the Devlins, Ned is torn between love and filial obedience. When he finally rebels against his mother's outpourings, Mary herself has been caught by an unkind fate, which makes her the domestic mainstay of her father and crippled brother. Such is the plot of this story — threadbare and timeworn. That one is barely aware of the defect is due largely to Mr. McLaverty's literary skill: his is a prose of a high order. He has invested his characters with an honest simplicity which makes them and their tragic problems real.

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## THE OPEN FORUM

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### NEGROES, THE SOUTH AND WORLD GOVERNMENT

SIR: In Rudolph Von Abele's interesting article, "Jefferson Davis, Nationalist," in the March AMERICAN MERCURY he mentions some of the reasons for the collapse of the Confederate States but does not state clearly the main cause, which was that the North in manpower and wealth was twice as strong as the South. In this respect his article is similar to that of the sports writer who explained why one pugilist knocked out another but failed to mention that the defeated man weighed 125 pounds against the victor's 250.

As Mr. Abele says, the Old South was feudalistic; and it remains rather feudalistic toward its own Negroes. But even so, there is no other group of ten million Negroes on earth that equals the Southern group in freedom, vigor or civilization.

Mr. Abele is an advocate of world government and there is implicit in his article the idea that all nations including our own should come under a World State. But will it promote individual freedom to combine dinosaur nations into one gigantosaur nation? The South lost its war for independence but as a loyal part of the United States it is still nationalistic and opposes the surrender of U. S. independence to world government. If this be feudalism it is the sort that has made the Swiss Cantons a free island in war-torn Europe. Atomic bombs in the hands of small nations such as Switzerland and Sweden can help to hasten the "withering" of dinosaur states. The free individual requires not more but less political government, whether local or global.

Against the idea of world imperium, whether from Communism or international synthesis, is pitted the view that ever since the fall of the Roman imperium there has been in spite of imperial revivals a steady trend toward smaller independent states — for instance the separation of Sweden and Norway, and Eire from Britain.

In this view world government is not a modern but an obsolete idea.

The U. S. is small when compared to the world and should it submit to world government, in any contest with it the U. S. would be a light, not a heavy weight and this could result in Washington becoming another Richmond.

LLOYD E. PRICE

Fort Worth, Tex.

SIR: In reply I would say only that, while Mr. Price is probably correct in saying that the Confederacy collapsed because the North possessed an enormous material advantage, this is no really satisfactory explanation of the war since it fails to explain why the North possessed such an advantage. My attempt was to show something of the reasons for it, as they appeared to me. I took more or less for granted the superiority of the North as Mr. Price states it, and sought to go behind, to explain a disparity whose causes are by no means obvious.

On Mr. Price's second point, when I look at the outrageously filthy and substandard hovels in which so many Southern Negroes live, and contemplate the narrow, circumscribed manner in which they must pass their lives, I am by no means as sanguine as he of their degree of freedom, vigor, or civilization.

And finally, so far as his third point is concerned, it seems to me to be an unfortunate truth that, in a society in which technological advances are constantly and ever more rapidly rendering individuals dependent upon one another, for evil or good, and making it increasingly more possible for the actions of individuals in one part of the globe to have enormous impact, for evil or good, upon individuals in another, remote, part of the globe, the necessity is inescapably for more, rather than less, government extended over greater,

rather than lesser, spheres of human life, and embracing larger, rather than smaller, economic and geographical units. If we want technology, we must accept planning. And planning, to be at all effective, must be global. If that is not our desire, then we must abandon our conveniences and our science for the rudimentary habits of earlier ages.

*Winter Park, Fla.*

RUDOLPH VON ABEL

## STASSEN: PRO AND CON

SIR: It was surprising to find in the March issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY the propaganda about Harold E. Stassen ["Stassen of Minnesota," by Roscoe Drummond].

It is evident that Roscoe Drummond did not search out in Minnesota those who offered sincere and outspoken opposition to Mr. Stassen, but in the main was content with the version of the monopoly press organization.

When Mr. Drummond can defend Stassen's going to Nebraska in 1942 to speak against Senator George W. Norris, one of the most ardent champions of progressive legislation the nation has had, his other interpretations are open to suspicion.

In the primary election of 1938 I fought against patronage control and other bad practices that overwhelmed the Farmer-Labor party. In 1940 and 1942 I was the Farmer-Labor nominee against Stassen and know his tactics.

In the campaigns against Stassen, I exposed his subservience to the iron mining and other monopoly interests. It is expected that the Cowles monopoly press in Minneapolis, sponsors of Stassen, will continue to feed such chatter as small campaign contributions of one dollar and up, but it is disappointing to find your magazine offering the same kind of propaganda.

The cause of freedom is not served by dressing up a camouflager.

*Askov, Minnesota*

HJALMAR PETERSEN

SIR: The only comment which I would like to make in reply to Mr. Petersen's letter is to call attention to the exact statement in the article which he is criticizing, and to submit that, in my judgment, the statement represents faithful reporting. It is as follows:

"They bemoaned the fact that he went into Nebraska in 1942 to help defeat liberal George Norris, but it is said in Mr. Stassen's behalf that by this time the aging Senator Norris was not in a

position to render effective service to himself, to the Senate or to liberalism."

ROSCOE DRUMMOND

*Washington, D. C.*

## CANCER CAUGHT IN TIME

SIR: I am a fairly constant reader of your excellent magazine. I am obliged to say "fairly constant," for it does not appear regularly on the Paris newsstands.

However, you may like to know that I must thank you most sincerely for a cure which might not have taken place so quickly and successfully had I not read your magazine.

In your October 1946 issue you published an advertisement about cancer, inserted by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. I read it, and though it contained nothing which I did not already know, it stuck. Towards the middle of November I noticed that a kind of wart had appeared on my tongue, which, though painless, was rather annoying when I was eating. It is quite likely that, had I not read your advertisement, I would have neglected this small tumor until it had got considerably worse. But I remembered this timely warning and went to see my doctor, who . . . sent me to the *Institut Curie* in Paris, where the cancerous origin of that tumor was detected. I was immediately treated by X-rays, and then operated upon. The surgeon in charge told me that the whole of the treatment had been greatly facilitated by its being started practically as soon as the disease manifested itself.

I thought that you as well as the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company would like to know that the advertisement has been effective in one instance at least, and that a Frenchman thanks you very much for the help it afforded him.

ROBERT BAUMGARTNER

*Paris, France*

## AN OPTOMETRIST PROTESTS

SIR: I am certain that a magazine of the standing and prestige of THE AMERICAN MERCURY does not intend to publish any article that is biased or inspired by a lack of knowledge of the true facts.

My office has had almost an avalanche of mail protesting against an article by Louise Cross entitled "What Doctors Know About Glaucoma," published in the November 1946 issue. . . .

The opening sentence says, "There is good

reason for insisting that eye examinations be made by an ophthalmologist."

Optometry is the profession dedicated to visual care. The optometrist is one who is "skilled in the art and science of visual care: who examines eyes, refracts (without the use of drugs); investigates visual skills, performance, and achievement; makes visual analysis; prescribes visual aids (including contact lenses and telescopic spectacles); adapts lenses; and gives training for the rehabilitation of visual performance. The professional education of optometrists includes: ocular anatomy, physiology, ocular pathology, psychology, physics, mathematics, geometric optics, mechanical optics, physiological optics, theoretic optometry, and practical optometry. Every state and the District of Columbia require a license to practice optometry which is issued only after successfully completing the foregoing professional courses and passing the required State Board examination."

WALTER F. KIMBALL, O.D.

St. Joseph, Mo.

SIR: Dr. Kimball's letter is an excellent argument for the well-trained optometrist's competence in prescribing for glasses, which no one questions. He offers very little to suggest competence in recognizing eye disease, and nothing whatever as to the optometrist's ability to treat eye disease. This agrees with my article.

LOUISE CROSS

New York City.

## FACTS ABOUT HYDROPHOBIA

SIR: I happened to read in the February issue of the AMERICAN MERCURY some paragraphs on hydrophobia written by Bergen Evans [in "The Skeptics' Corner"]. He writes, regarding the derivation of this word: "This error became enshrined in the Latin name for the affliction." And again: "The common man has been trained to believe anything if it is only put into Latin, the language of the masters, the priests, the prophets." Mr. Evans is very much mistaken in his belief that "hydrophobia" comes from the Latin. The Greeks had a word for it, namely "hudwr" and "phobos," or "phobia," meaning "water" and "fear" respectively. Practically all "phobias" take Greek nouns. . . .

F. A. BROCKMAN  
Sacred Heart Church

McAllen, Tex.

SIR: Father Brockman knows some Greek, but he is weak in etymology. "Hydro-" and "-phobia" can be traced back to Greek and, I assume, on back and back through Sanskrit, Indo-Germanic or what you know until we reach that bright morning in September, 4004 B.C., on which, Bishop Ussher assures us, the first water and, probably, the first fear appeared. But "hydrophobia" as a word comes to us from Latin. If I am "very much mistaken" in this belief, my mistake is shared by Webster's *New International* and the Oxford English dictionaries.

BERGEN EVANS

Evanston, Ill.

## FACTS ABOUT THUMB-SUCKING

SIR: Recently while lunching at a faculty club here on our campus the subject of popular medical articles came up for discussion. Those present were unanimous in their condemnation of most magazines which have routinely colored scientific research to make it more palatable for lay consumption. Of the periodicals mentioned at this time only the AMERICAN MERCURY came out unscathed. The reason for this is obvious: your articles on science are written by recognized leaders in their field or are read and checked for accuracy by authorities of the particular specialty under discussion before publication.

For these reasons it came as a distinct shock to read in "The Skeptics' Corner" the inference that thumb-sucking is absolutely harmless. The remarks on frustration due to attempts at breaking the habit were well taken, but to proceed to the conclusion that the habit does no damage to the teeth and jaws is vicious and fallacious to say the least. The child psychologist knows suppression of the habit induces frustrations; the pediatrician is well aware of the dietary implications such an emotional disturbance can cause; and the orthodontist has irrefutable evidence showing the results of the continued exercise of these pressure habits in young children. In fact when we attempt the correction of dental and facial deformities we bring into play pressures against the teeth and jaws very similar to those induced by the child when he sucks his thumb. Some of those who have studied this problem extensively have shown that as high as 30 per cent of all cases of malocclusion have a history of one of the many sucking and pressure habits picked up in infancy. Others have indicated that of those children who

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suck their thumbs or fingers over one half reach adolescence with malocclusions requiring orthodontic treatment. This is particularly true if the habit persists for a long time. Some of the best minds in our profession have reported on the problem (Swinehart, Johnson, Lewis, *et al.*) and none has failed to report this as an etiologic factor of significance. Strangely, some of the finest and most complete work in this respect has come from Dr. Evans' own school, Northwestern. . . .

If parents are to be advised to forget the habit, then they should also be advised that this course may produce dental deformity. . . .

ROBERT E. MOYERS, D.D.S.

State University of Iowa

Iowa City, Ia.

SIR: First, instead of any wisecracking evasions, let me say that I was at fault in making my statement absolute. Dr. Moyers supplied a needed corrective, for which sincere thanks.

Many doctors, perhaps ignorantly, do not view thumb-sucking with the alarm which dentists, perhaps more knowing, accord it. Dr. Philip C. Jeans states that "the habit in moderation probably does no harm," though he thinks it advisable to discourage it. My own informants, a pediatrician and an anatomist, viewed it lightly. Since more than one third of all children suck their thumbs to some extent, more than one third of children with any sort of teeth would have thumb-sucking in their history. But I assume there was some more definite means of correlating the thumb-sucking with the malocclusion.

At any rate, I hope you publish Dr. Moyers' letter. It would be a dreadful thing if in the next generation every time anyone saw a buck-toothed man it was assumed that his mother had been a reader of the MERCURY.

BERGEN EVANS

Evanston, Ill.

SIR: That no person can be well qualified to discuss creditably more than a few subjects, seems rather well proved by Bergen Evans [in] your March "Skeptics' Corner". . . .

That thumb-sucking is bad for a baby is so well established that Evans' arguments to the contrary should, for the sake of the parents who might be deceived by them, not be allowed to go unrefuted. . . .

That green (immature) apples cause painful trouble in the digestive tract also is too well-known to require proof. Immature apples, not yet having received from the tree sap enough of

the chemical elements of ripe apples to impart to them the food chemistry of properly developed apples, are not food, and, if eaten, cannot nourish and can only make trouble, notwithstanding the assertion that "if sufficiently chewed, the stomach cannot distinguish between a ripe and an unripe apple." The so-called "stomach ache" occurs in the bowels.

The idea that "ground glass is poison" is much too absurd to be given space, I submit, as any harmful action from eating glass would be mechanical (cutting) and not poisonous.

WALTER W. STRONG

*Former Commissioner of Health*

*Glen Ellyn, Ill.*

SIR: I have answered Dr. Strong's first objection in my letter answering Dr. Moyers. I plead guilty of having made too inclusive a statement.

For his second, his quarrel is with Dr. Thomen.

For the third, nothing is too absurd to be given space in a column which gives space to examining absurdities. People have certainly believed that ground glass was poisonous. The belief was common three hundred years ago when Sir Thomas Browne performed a special experiment to refute it and it is still common.

BERGEN EVANS

*Evanston, Ill.*

## THE REAL ESTATE LOBBY

SIR: The article by Alexander L. Crosby on "The Real Estate Lobby" in the March issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY certainly arrived at an opportune time. On March second the executive committee of the Colorado State Grange, meeting in its regular monthly session in Denver, had before it a solicitation to join the National Home and Property Owners Foundation, with letters, pieces of literature about the organization, and a blank for signing and paying dues.

We had no serious intention of joining, but were interested in statements in the literature about the dangers of socialism . . . or the perils to the American way of life or to the American boy or girl, statements which we get tired of reading when there are so many evils right at hand crying for remedies. . . . We also noted that among the names of officials and sponsors were some who are not particularly noted for any special interest in the welfare of small property owners.

So we refused to join. Now we have Mr. Crosby's article, which effectively exposes the situation, upholds our suspicions, and justifies our refusal to join.

RUDOLPH JOHNSON

*Boulder, Col.*



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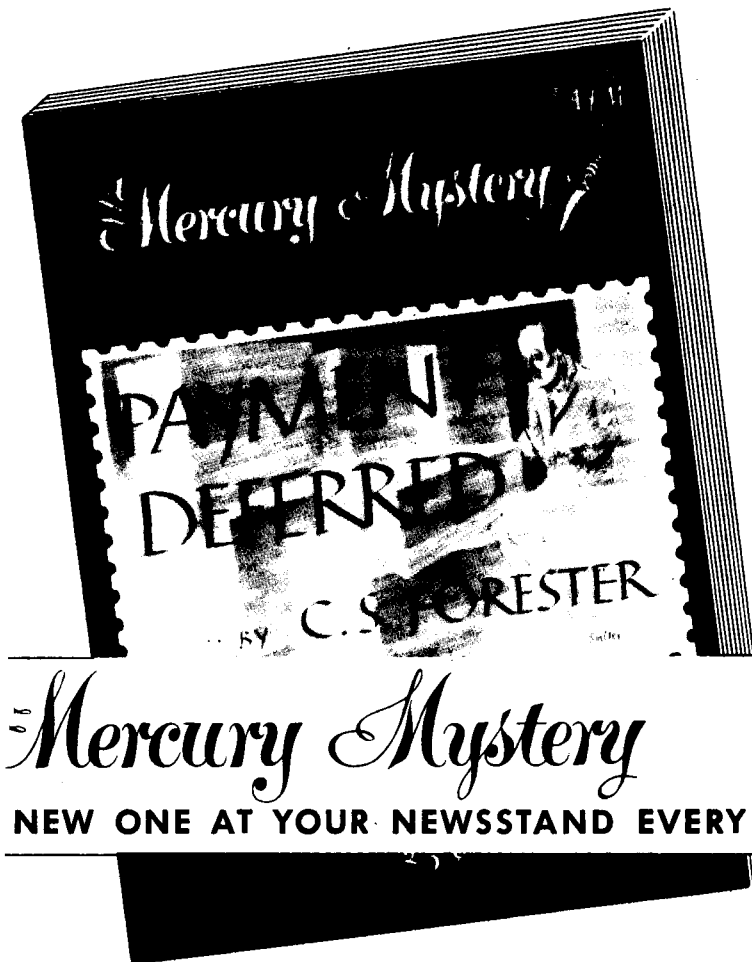
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